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Total Deleted Page(s) = 52
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Page 13 ~ b6; b7C; b7E;
Page 14 \sim b7E;
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Page 24 \sim b7E;
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Page 38 ~ b7E;
Page 39 ~ b6; b7C; b7E;
Page 40 \sim b7E;
Page 41 ~ b6; b7C; b7E;
Page 42 \sim b7E;
Page 66 ~ b6; b7C;
Page 75 ~ b6; b7C;
Page 101 ~ b6; b7C;
Page 102 ~ b6; b7C;
Page 103 ~ b6; b7C;
Page 105 ~ b6; b7C;
Page 106 ~ b6; b7C;
Page 107 ~ b6; b7C;
Page 108 ~ b6; b7C;
Page 109 ~ b6; b7C;
Page 110 ~ b6; b7C;
Page 111 ~ b6; b7C;
Page 112 ~ b6; b7C;
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Page 400 ~ b6; b7C; b7D;
Page 433 ~ b6; b7C; b7E;
Page 434 ~ b6; b7C; b7E;
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FD-340 (Rev. 7-29-92)	JAI	
Universal Case File Number	de company or ign	b7E
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Serial # of Originating Document		
Date Received 4/3/9>	*Substantial	
From		
(Name of Contributor)		
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By		b6 b7С
To Be Returned Yes No Receipt Given Yes No Grand Jury Material - Disseminate Only Pursuant to Rule 6 (e) Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure Yes No Title:		
Reference:		
(Communication Enclosing Material)		
Description: Original notes re interview of		<u>.</u>
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*U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1993-358-735/80742

FD-340 (Rev. 7-29-92)					JA2
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escription: ☐ Original r	otes re inte	rview of	
DECEDE	NTS'	DENTIFYING INF	70
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PERSONAL INFORMATION

<u> </u>	Name	Legal Name	DOB	SSN#	DL#	Expires
		n de santa de la companya de la comp	the state of the	प्रमात्रासारमध्यम् ५०००५०	たったいいかいないないできませんだっています	I metropassion
1,	ALX	Moore, David Geoffery	08-14-56	558-94-8508	CA C6949958	08-14-98
2.	ANL	Butcher, Cheryl Elaine	07-15-54	496-58-8357	TX 14159303	07-15-98
3.	AVN	McCormick, Joel Peter	04-23-68	388-76-1664	UT 158165910	04-23-99
4.	BRN	Nelson, Norma Jeanne	01-31-38	513-32-3193	TX 14844216	01-31-98
5.	CHK	Emst, Erika	10-12-56	609-54-0796	CA B3225676	10-12-99
6.	DRR	Schauf, Brian A. (Alan)	05-23-57	545-80-2395	NM 104255876	06-23-98
7.	DST	Nichols, Thomas Alva	04-15-38	334-30-0426"	AZ B12929527	04-15-97
S.	DVV	McCurdy-Hill, Yvonne	06/17/58	296-64-1211	OH RK495223	06/17/99
9.	DYM	Pease, Lindley Ayerhart	10/02/55	002-38-1470	FL P200-521-55-362-0	10-02-98
10.	EVN	Abreo, Dana Tracey	04-22-62	557-47-2327	CO 941080686	04-22-99
11.	GLD	Brugato, LaDonna Ann	03-13-57	544-62-1386	CO U403579	03-13-98
12.	GLN	Gale, Lawrence Jackson	01-07-50	524-70-1532	CA B3223379	01-07-99
13.	JMM	Arancio, Robert John	05-30-51	262-96-1081	TX 04485143	05-30-97
14.	JNN	Strom, Susan Frances	02-19-53	508-66-5783	TX 05161022	02-19-98
15.	NWL	Thurman, Denise June	12-26-52	089-46-3543	TX 10991156	12-26-97
16.	LEO	Johnson, Derwin L.(Lee)	12-11-54	561-98-7339	CA B7514930	12-11-99
17.	LGG	Lahson, Logan M.	05-04-54	525-66-8957*	NM 104255884	06-04-98
<u> </u>		Craig, John M. (Michael)	(1	"	16	06-04-99
18.	LVV	LaMontagne, Julie E(Elmira)	11-26-51	025-40-0824	NM 037233994	12-26-97 12-26-00
19.	MLL	Sister Elizabeth Montague Richter, Margaret Ella	01-10-51	565-90-1084	CA C6452088	01-10-99
20.	NRR	Paup, S.E. Nora	07-06-43	549-62-6561*	NM 037104442	08-06-97
20.	IVICIC	(Paup, Susan Elizabeth)	01-00-45	347-02-0301	1401 057104442	00-00-57
21.	OLL	Van Sinderen, David Cabot	11-10-48	119-36-3927*	CA C6360988	11-10-98
22.	PRS	Leonard, Jacqueline Opal	04-17-25	478-26-2985	CO 941220345	04-17-99
23.	QST	Foster, Alphonzo Richardo	11-03-52	481-68-0632	CA B7514931	11-03-00
					*Commercial	
24.	SLV	Cooke, Suzanne Sylvia	12-22-42	522-52-9782*	NM 108692294	01-22-00
25.	SMM	Deal, Betty Eldric	06-18-33	536-28-5019	TX 14145128	06-18-98
26.	SNG	Skalla, Joyce Angela	03-29-39	503-40-1324	NM 104259383	04-29-99
27.	SNN	Bull, Margaret Jane	12-13-43	536-44-5437*	NM 108692758	01-13-00
28.	SRR	McCarter, Steven T. (Terry)	06-24-56	410-04-0627	NM 037092860	07-24-97
29.	STL	St. Louis, Gary (Jordan)	07-02-53	567-76-6597	NM 110987773	08-02-99
30.	STM	Welch, Gordon Thomas	02-23-47	039-40-1178	CA B7861312	02-23-00
31.	STR	Pesho, Lucy Eva	08-24-33	521-38-6123	NM 37157759	09-24-97
32.	TDD	Bowers, Raymond Alan	12-02-51	040-48-1266	FL B620721514420	12-02-00
33.	TLL	Carrier, Michael Howard	03-23-49	572-76-0443*	TX 05058675	03-23-98
34.	TRS	Lewis, Jeffery Howard	06-02-56	457-08-2737	TX 10497324	06-02-97
35.	VRN	Sandoe, Michael Barr	07-03-71	224-35-0705	CO 96-004-0694	07-03-01
36.	WKN	Nelson, Nancy Diane	08-20-52	504-66-5380	AZ B13852793 .	08-20-12
37.	WND .	Lahson, Judith Ann	10-01-46	573-74-8695	TX 16976791	10-01-99
38	YRS	(Rowland, Judith Ann) Maeder, Gail Rence	08-18-69	120-68-0007*	UT 158213218	08-18-99
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FD-340 (Rev. 7-29-92)		2001)	
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Serial # of Originating, Docum				
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From Pocatello	(Name of Contributor)			
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Title and Character of Case:	
HEAVENS GATE	
	•
Property Acquired: Source from which Property Acquired: SDSO DET.	
04/03/1997	
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Anticipated Disposition: Acquired By: Case Agent:	b 70
Grand Jury Material - NO (Disseminate only pursuant to Rule 6(e))	
Description of Property: 1B 1 Date Entered	
EIGHTY ONE (81) FLOPPY DISKS	
Barcode: E1246479 Location: ECC GEP SHELF ROW 42-D R 04/07/1997	
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FD-340 (Rev. 7-29-92)
Universal Case File Number
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Date Received 107097
From SA
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By
(Name or Special Agent)
To Be Returned Yes No Receipt Given Yes No Grand Jury Material - Disseminate Only Pursuant to Rule 6 (e) Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure Yes No Title:
Reference: (Communication Enclosing Material)
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Title and Character of	Case:			
Date Property Acquired 04/03/1997	: Source from which	Property Acquired:		 b6 b70
Anticipated Disposition		Case Agent: y pursuant to Rule 6(e)))	
Description of Propert 1B 2 TWENTY NINE (29) OPT THIRTY (3) PAGES OF	ICAL DISKS	•	Date Entered	1
Barcode: E1246480	Location: ECC GEP	SHELF ROW 42-D R	04/07/1997	

Case Number: Owning Office: SAN DIEGO

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On (date)

(Name)_

(City) _

Description of

Item(s):

(Street Address)

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Universal Case File Number		b7E
Field Office Acquiring Evidence		
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From(Name of Contributor)		
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(City and State)		
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		B/C
To Be Returned ☐ Yes ☑ No Receipt Given ☐ Yes ☑ No Grand Jury Material - Disseminate Only Pursuant to Rule 6 (e) Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure ☐ Yes ☑ No		
Reference:		
(Communication Enclosing Material)	•	
Description: Original notes re interview of		
LIST OF DECEDENTS & HEY NAMES		
ASSOCIATED W/GROUP		
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PERSONAL INFORMATION

	37-	Tanal Mana	1 700	l contil	T) T II	
There	Name	Legal Name	DOB	SSN#	DL#	Expires
1.	ALX	Moore, David Geoffery	08-14-56	558-94-8508	CA C6949958	08-14-98
2.	ANL	Butcher, Cheryl Elaine	07-15-54	496-58-8357	TX 14159303	07-15-98
3.	AVN	McCormick, Joel Peter	04-23-68	388-76-1664	UT 158165910	04-23-99
4.	BRN	Nelson, Norma Jeanne	01-31-38	513-32-3193	TX 14844216	01-31-98
5.	CHK	Ernst, Erika	1 10-12-56	609-54-0796	CA B3225676	10-12-99
6.	DRR	Schaaf, Brian A. (Alan)	05-23-57	545-80-2395	NM 104255876	06-23-98
7.	DST	Nichols, Thomas Alva	04-15-38	334-30-0426"	AZ B12929527	04-15-97
<u>s.</u>	DVV	McCurdy-Hill, Yyonne	06/17/58	296-64-1211	OH RK495223	06/17/99
9.	DYM	Pease, Lindley Ayerhart	10/02/55	002-38-1470	FL P200-521-55-362-0	10-02-98
10.	EVN	Abreo, Dana Tracey	04-22-62	557-47-2327	CO 941080686	04-22-99
11.	GLD	Brugato, LaDonna Ann	03-13-57	544-62-1386	CO U403579	03-13-98
12.	GLN	Gale, Lawrence Jackson	01-07-50	524-70-1532	CA B3223379	01-07-99
13.	JMM	Arancio, Robert John	05-30-51	262-96-1081	TX 04485143	05-30-97
14.	NNL	Strom, Susan Frances	02-19-53	508-66-5783	TX 05161022	02-19-98
15.	JWN	Thurman, Denise June	12-26-52	089-46-3543	TX 10991156	12-26-97
16.	LEO	Johnson, Darwin L.(Lee)	12-11-54	561-98-7339	CA B7514930	12-11-99
17.	LGG	Lahson, Logan M.	05-04-34	525-66-8957*	NM 104255884	06-04-98
		Craig, John M. (Michael)	"	16	16	06-04-99
18.	LVV	LaMontagne, Julie E(Elmira)	11-26-51	026-40-0824	NM 037233994	12-26-97
19.	MLL	Sister Elizabeth Montague Richter, Margaret Ella	01-10-51	565-90-1084	CA C6432088	12-26-00 01-10-99
20.	NRR	Paup, S.E. Nora	07-06-43	549-62-6561*	NM 037104442	08-06-97
20.	Mac	(Paup, Susan Elizabeth)	01-00-45	347-02-0301	14101 057104442	00-00-77
21.	OLL	Van Sinderen, David Cabot	11-10-48	119-36-3927*	CA C6360988	11-10-98
22.	PRS	Leonard, Jacqueline Opal	04-17-25	478-26-2985	CO 941220345	04-17-99
23.	QST	Foster, Alphonzo Richardo	11-03-52	481-68-0632	CA B7514931	11-03-00
			10.77.40	700 70 0500±	*Commercial	
24.	SLV	Cooke, Suzanne Sylvia	12-22-42	522-52-9782*	NM 108692294	01-22-00
25.	SMM	Deal, Betty Eldric	06-18-33	536-28-5019	TX 14145128	06-18-98
26.	SNG	Skalla, Joyce Angela	03-29-39	503-40-1324	NM 104259383	04-29-99
27.	SNN	Bull, Margaret Jane	12-13-43	536-44-5437*	NM 108692758	01-13-00
28.	SRR	McCarter, Steven T. (Terry)	06-24-56	410-04-0627	NM 037092860	07-24-97
29.	STL	St. Louis, Gary (Jordan)	07-02-53	567-76-6597	NM 110987773	08-02-99
30.	STM	Welch, Gordon Thomas	02-23-47	089-40-1178	CA B7861312	02-23-00
31.	STR	Pesho, Lucy Eva	08-24-33	521-38-6123	NM 37157759	09-24-97
32.	TDD	Bowers, Raymond Alan	12-02-51	040-48-1266	FL B620721514420	12-02-00
33.	TLL	Carrier, Michael Howard	03-23-49	572-76-0443*	TX 05058675	03-23-98
34.	TRS	Lewis, Jeffery Howard	06-02-56	457-08-2737	TX 10497324	06-02-97 07-03-01
35.	VRN	Sandoe, Michael Barr	07-03-71	224-35-0705 504-66-5380	CO 96-004-0694	08-20-12
36.	WKN	Nelson, Nancy Diane Lahson, Judith Ann	10-01-46	573-74-8695	AZ B13852793 .	10-01-99
37.	WND	(Rowland, Judith Ann)	10-01-40	373-14-0033	TX 16976791	10-01-33
38	YRS	Maeder, Gail Renee	08-18-69	120-68-0007*	UT 158213218	08-18-99
39	Do	APPLEWHITE, MA	PSHALL	5/17/2		

Rev. 3/21/97

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- MEMBERS -

WHO ARE: MRC, SRF, OSC RKK, JHN

(POSSIBLY REMAINING MEMBERS)

KEY PERSON IS	2
AKA	

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INTERACT ENTERTAINMENT GROUP
SCRIPT

Recipie

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Preceder	ice:	IMMEDIATE			Date:	03/28/1997	
To: Sar	n Dieg	lo	Attn	ı: [b6 b7С
From: E					vices Center (II) 496-3833	SC)	
Approved	d By:						b6 b7C
Drafted	ву: [
Case ID	#: [(Pending)				b7E
Title:	JUDIT STEVE LUCY	ONZO FOSTER: CH LAHSON: EN MCCARTER: PESHO: ON WELCH:	#132552 #132555 #132557 #132561 #132563		LAWRENCE GALE: JULIE LAMONTAGN LINDEY PEASE: MICHAEL SANDOE:	#132560	

Synopsis: Database searches conducted by the Butte ITC

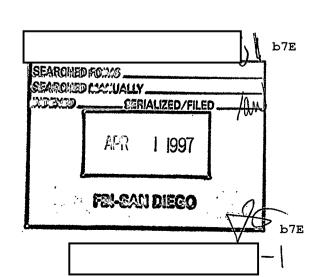
Enclosures: Attached are copies of printouts setting forth results of inquiries conducted by the Butte ITC. Also attached is a copy of an accomplishment/reply form. It is requested that you record the IISC accomplishments on this form and return it to the Butte ITC.

Details: Each subject listed above was searched for locator and identifying record and the positive search results are enclosed.

No records were found for LINDSEY PEASE or GORDON

WELCH.

Please review the material enclosed and let me know if you have any questions or need anything else.



To: San Diego From: Re: 03/28/1997

b7E

LEAD(s):

Set Lead 1:

SAN DIEGO

AT SAN DIEGO

Complete and return reply form to Butte ITC for each request.

**

FD-809 (Rev. 12-5-96)



INVESTIGATIVE INFORMATION REQUEST FORM

INVESTIGATIVE INFORMATION REQUEST FORM FBI, Butte Information Technology Center 400 North Main Street, Room #115 Butte, Montana 59701 ITC Use Only: Date/Time In: 3/08/10/30 am 2 pm Date/Time Out: 3-08/11/35 am 2 pm Database(s) Used: 1. The base of the content of the c	
Butte, Montana 59701 > Commercial Telephone (406) 782-2304 > FTS: (406) 782-2304 FAX: (406) 782-9507 & 782-7418 > Secure FAX & STU III: (406) 782-2304, Ext. 26	
TO: FBI, BUTTE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CENTER Date: 3 28 9	
Requestor: Phone #: (JQ -QH - OB)FAX #: UCFN: (UCFN (File #) is Required)	
Office/RA: Office	3
SEARCH CRITERIA (Attach additional sheets if necessary) Name - Last: Middle:	
Alias: Sex: DOB1: / DOB2: /	-
SSAN1: SSAN2: Spouse:	•
Fugitive: Yes No Driver's License #: State:	
RESIDENCE	•
Street Address: City/State: Zip: Phone:	
•	-
BUSINESS Business Name: Street Address:	
	-
City/State: Zip: Phone: Business ID#: CHECK DESIRED SEARCH PARAMETERS (Please check only those that are needed)	•
	_
Wirth Miskulay Div.	
 □ 2. Determine All Individuals Associated with Social Security Number(s) □ 3. Report Validity of Social Security Number □ 4. Determine Who is Associated with Telephone Number(s) 	
☐ 5. Determine Address of Business/Person (,,,,,	
☐ 6. Determine Property Owned by Individual (, U.S,,, State(s))	
7. Determine Who Owns Property Listed Above	
8. Determine Who Resides at Address Listed Above	
 □ 9. Determine Financial Background Info, i.e., Bankruptcy, Judgments, Liens, UCC filings, or Lawsuits □ 10. Determine Corporate Business Info, i.e., Officer, Director, Registered Agent 	
To: Betermine Corporate Business Into, 1.6., Officer, Brestor, Registered Tigon (Person/Business))
□ 11. Customs Border Crossings / Subject query / I-94 info (circle one)	
☐ 12. Federal Prison Inmate Information	
☐ 13. Telemarketing Complaints	
Reply From: FBI, Butte Information Technology Center (BITC)	
Reply From: FBI, Butte Information Technology Center (BITC) Return Reply To:	
Return Reply To: SAC,	•
Return Reply To:	3

619-573-4458 (Beeper)

Page No. 1 3/28/97

SAN DIEGO COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE MASS SUICIDE IN RANCHO SANTA FE MARCH 28, 1997

DECEDENT'S NAME	SEX	DATE OF BIRTH	SSN	AGE	ST. LIC.	CASE NO.
	===			===	====	
APPLEWHITE, MARSHALL HERF 132549 (AKA ELDER, JOHATHAN)	M	05/17/31		66 -		97-0739
DRUGALU. DADUNNA ANN	<u> </u>	03/13/57	544-62-1386	40	_CO	97-0720
132550 DEAL, BETTY ELDRIE	F	06/18/33	-536-28-5019-	64	TX	-970709
(3a66) ERNST, ERIKA	P		609-54-0796	-40		97-0726
13a66a FOSTER, ALPHONZO RICHARD4	M		481-68-0632	_	MN	97-0702
132653 GALE, LAWRENCE JACKSON 5	M	•	524-70-1532	47	CA	97-0735
138664 JOHNSON, DARWIN LEE L	<u>M</u>	12/11/54	561-98-7339	42	UT	97-0732
13a565 LAHSON, JUDITH ANN 7	F	•	573-74-8695	50	TX	97-0727 -
(ROWLAND, JUDITH ANN)						
13a656LAMONTAGNE, JULIE ELMIRAS	F	11/26/51	026-40-0824	45	NM	97-0729 -
13a667MCCARTER, STEVEN TERRY 9	M	06/24/56	410-04-0627	41	ИM	97-0701
3a698 NELSON, NORMA JEANE 10	F	01/31/38	513-32-3193	- 59	TX	97-0707
13a659 NICHOLS, THOMAS ALVA-1	<u>M</u>	04/15/38	334-30-0426	- 59 -	AZ	97-0731
1306LOPEASE, LINDEY AYERHART 10	F	10/02/55		41		97-0711
13abbi Pesho, Lucy eva 13	F	•	521-38-6123	63	NM	97-0704
3262SANDOE, MICHAEL BARRIY	M		224-35-0705			97-0719
12053WELCH, GORDON THOMAS 16	M	•	089-40-1178		AZ	97-0706
(55221121117)		,,		- •		2. 0.00

Everything to I'D

Confiled-Der

b6 b7C

Fax: 619-495-5956

FBI, BUTTE ITC-INVESTIGATIVE INFORMATION SERVICES

************ Dept: DEPARTMENT1 / Queued by: SUPERVISOR ************

SS: 481-68-0632

DATE:03-28-1997 TIME:13:13:08 SUBJECT ID:SOCIAL SEARCH

9-481680632, V-06/042/6.30

PAGE 1 DATE 3-28-97 TIME 14:17:01 PCB45 V501

ALPHONZO R FOSTER 2896 JAMES S AVE MINNEAPOLIS MN 55408-1875 RPTD: 9-92

2630 DUPONT N AVE MINNEAPOLIS MN 55411-2040 RPTD: 8-90 TO 12-90

END -- TRW SOCIAL SEARCH

DATE:03-28-1997 TIME:13:10:33 SUBJECT ID:DTEC

DTEC-481-68-0632.

SSN ISSUED -67 STATE ISSUED-IA

M1 OF 1 NM-FOSTER, ALPHONZO, R CA-2630, DUPONT, AVE N, MINNEAPOLIS, MN, 55411, 08/90 SS-481-68-0632 &

END OF REPORT EQUIFAX AND AFFILIATES - 03/28/97

MetroNet(tm) PC Standard Search System PAGE: 3 Search Date: 03/28/97 LIST: 1 Request Number: 3 of 8 Search Result Input Request MULTI - FAMILY DWELLING b6 b7C (000) 000-0000 Search Result Return Codes: Primary: House # no match (nearest house # or multi-family dwelling). C.O.A. requested - none found. N.C.O.A. requested but not furnished - member of a batch < 100. **DEMOGRAPHICS:** Head of House's Date of Birth: Not Available Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length of Residence: 00 Gender: Unknown Median Family Income \$38,400 Wealth Rating is D Home Value Index 144 Median Home Value \$106,300 Other Household Members: 10 Nearbys Returned. 2. Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 02 Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 08 4.

1. 3. Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 04 Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 04 5. 6. b6 b7C Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 03 Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 03 7. 8. Dwelling: 8 Units Length: 03 Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 03 10. 9. Dwelling: 8 Units Length: 02 Dwelling: 8 Units Length: 02

	MetroNet(tm) PC	St	candard Search System PAGE: 1	
	LIST: 3 Request Number: 1 of 5		Search Date: 03/28/97	
	Search Result MULTI - FAMILY DWELLING	_	Input Request	b6
	(000) 000-0000	L		b7
	Search Result Return Codes: Primary: House # no match (neare C.O.A. requested - none found. N.C.O.A. requested but not furns		nouse # or multi-family dwelling).	
	DEMOGRAPHICS: Head of House's Date of Birth: Not Dwelling: 3 Units Gender: Unknown Median Family Income \$ Home Value Index 070	Le: We:	ailable ngth of Residence: 00 alth Rating is E dian Home Value \$137,500	
	Other Household Members:			
	10 Nearby	ys R	eturned.	
1.		2.		
	Dwelling: Duplex Length: 05		Dwelling: 5 Units Length: 02	
3.		4.		
Ĺ	Dwelling: 7 Units Length: 09	_	Dwelling: 5 Units Length: 05	
5.		6.		b6 b7C
	Dwelling: 7 Units Length: 06	L	Dwelling: 5 Units Length: 02	
7.		8.		
	Dwelling: 7 Units Length: 02		Dwelling: 5 Units Length: 02	
9.		10.		
Ĺ	Dwelling: 7 Units Length: 02		Dwelling: 5 Units Length: 07	

***** NO RECORD FOUND *****

END -- TRW

H 5

DATE:03-28-1997 TIME:13:10:41 SUBJECT ID:DTEC

DTEC-524-70-1532.

SSN ISSUED -64 STATE ISSUED-CO

51 NO RECORD FOUND&

END OF REPORT EQUIFAX AND AFFILIATES - 03/28/97

DR. TXDPS0000
13/50 03/28/97 11141
13:50 03/28/97 00513 DCFBIWAX3
TXT
LAHSON, JUDITH AHN
12811 WESTGROVE AVE 210, DALLAS, TX 75248-0000
RAC/W. SEX/F. DOB/100146. HGT/504. WGT/110. HAIR/WHI. EYE/BLU.
OLN/16976791. OLT/CLASS C. EXP/100199
RSTR:WITH CORRECTIVE LENSES
ENDR:HONE
STATUS:CLEAR

ML0138545.DQ.DCFBIWAX3.TX.TXT NAM/ROWLAND, JUDITH .DOB/100146.SEX/F

ML0138545 DCFBIWAK3 MESSAGE AT 1549 ON 3/28/97 ACCEPTED

DR.TXDPS0000 13:50 03/28/97 11145 13:50 03/28/97 00514 DCFBIWAX3 TXT NOT ON FILE NAM/ROWLAND, JUDITH .DOB/100146.SEX/F

ML0138545.DQ.DCFBIWAX3.MN.TXT NAM/LAMONTAGNE, JULIE.DOB/112651.SEX/F

ML0138545 DCFBIWAX3 MESSAGE AT 1549 ON 3/28/97 ACCEPTED

DR. MNOLN0000
13:51 03/28/97 03095
13:51 03/28/97 00515 DCFBIWAX3
TXT
NOT ON FILE NAM/LAMONTAGNE, JULIE

ML0138545. DQ. DCFBIWAX3. NM. TXT NAM/MCCARTER, STEVEN. DOB/062456. SEX/M

ML0138545 DCFBIWAK3 MESSAGE AT 1549 ON 3/28/97 ACCEPTED

пр иниспекса

MetroNet(tm) PC

Standard Search System

PAGE:

Search Date:

03/28/97

LIST: 3

Request Number: 2 of 5

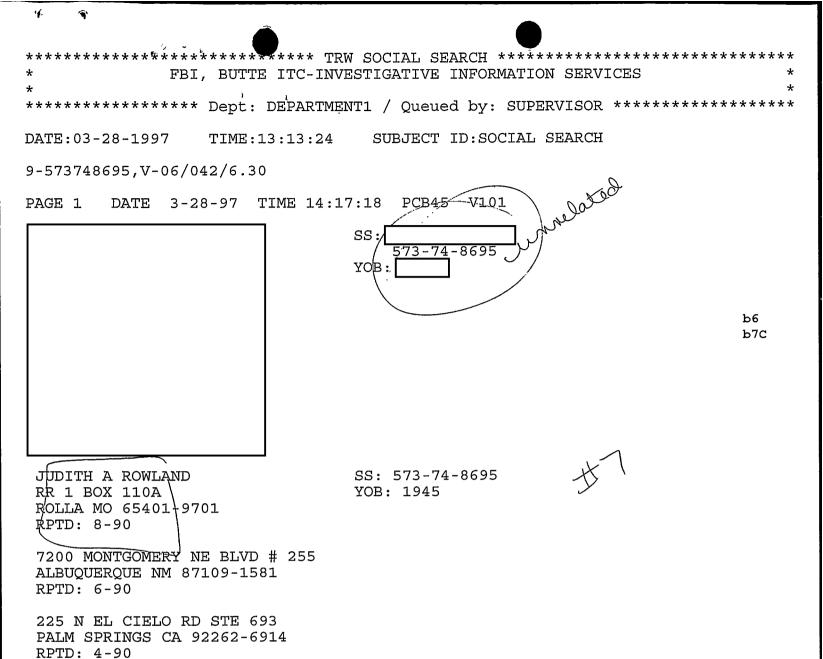
Original Input:

b6 b7C

Search Result Return Codes:

Primary: Address search, no match. C.O.A. requested - none found.

N.C.O.A. requested but not furnished - member of a batch < 100.



RR 1 BOX 108

RPTD: 12-86

ROLLA MO 65401-9701

END -- TRW SOCIAL SEARCH

> b6 b7C

M1 OF 1 NM-

SS-573-74-8695

END OF REPORT EQUIFAX AND AFFILIATES - 03/28/97

**************************************	***
*********** Dept: DEPARTMENT1 / Queued by: SUPERVISOR ********	***
DATE:03-28-1997 TIME:13:26:55 SUBJECT ID:SOCIAL SEARCH	
9- V-06/042/6.30	
PAGE 1 DATE 3-28-97 TIME 14:30:48 PCB83 V201	
SS: 573-74-8695* YOB: b	6 7C
1	

END -- TRW SOCIAL SEARCH

MetroNet(tm) PC Standard Search System

PAGE:

LIST: 1

Search Date:

03/28/97

Request Number: 1 of 8

City First Name Surname Search for JUDITH ROWLAND City Searched: ROLLA, MO Search Result: Surname search, no match found.

FBI, BUTTE ITC-INVESTIGATIVE INFORMATION SERVICES

******** Dept: DEPARTMENT1 / Queued by: SUPERVISOR ************

DATE:03-28-1997 TIME:13:13:32 SUBJECT ID:SOCIAL SEARCH

9-026400824, V-06/042/6.30

PAGE 1 DATE 3-28-97 TIME 14:17:26 PCB45 V401

JULIE E LA MONTAGNE

SS: 026-40-0824

13802 N SCOTTSDALE RD

YOB: 1951

SCOTTSDALE AZ 85254-3458

RPTD: 2-97

8400 S ST

ALBURQUERQUE NM 87112

RPTD: 4-96

8400 MENAUL NE BLVD STE A119 ALBUQUERQUE NM 87112-2200

RPTD: 11-95

5238 MONTGOMERY NE BLVD ALBUQUERQUE NM 87109-1301

RPTD: 10-95

JULIE E LAMONTAGE, JULIE M LAMONTAGNE

END -- TRW SOCIAL SEARCH

DATE:03-28-1997 TIME:13:11:05 SUBJECT ID:DTEC

DTEC-026-40-0824.

SSN ISSUED -66 STATE ISSUED-MA

M1 OF 1 NM-LAMONTAGNE, J, E CA-8400, N MENAUL, , ALBUQUERQUE, NM, 87112, 11/95 SS-026-40-0824 &

END OF REPORT EQUIFAX AND AFFILIATES - 03/28/97

MetroNet(tm) PC	Standard Search System PAGE: 5
LIST: 1 Request Number: 5 of 8	Search Date: 03/28/97
Search Result MULTI - FAMILY DWELLING (000) 000-0000	Input Request b6 b7
Search Result Return Codes: Primary: House # no match (neares C.O.A. requested - none found. N.C.O.A. requested but not furnis	t house # or multi-family dwelling). hed - member of a batch < 100.
Median Family Income \$68,900	Available Length of Residence: 00 Wealth Rating is A Median Home Value \$97,100
Other Household Members:	
10 Nearbys	Returned.
Dwelling: 5 Units Length: 02	2. Dwelling: 7 Units Length: 09
	4.
Dwelling: 8 Units Length: 02	Dwelling: 7 Units Length: 02
pwelling: 8 onics bengin: 04	Dwelling: 7 Units Length: 06
	8.

10.

Dwelling: Duplex Length: 04

Dwelling: Duplex Length: 03

9.

Dwelling: 3 Units

Dwelling: Duplex Length: 03

13:51 @3/28/97 @3692 13:54 83/28/97 00516 DCFBIWA TXT ******* NEW MEXICO DRIVERS LICENSE AMOUIRY ****** MCCARTER. STEVEN T 8010 ZUNI, ALBUQUERQUE, NM. 87108 SEX/M. DOB/062456. HGT/509. WGT/140. EYE/BLU. 90C/410040627. OLN/037092860. EXP/072497 OLT/CLASS D . MOTORCYCLE ENDORSEMENT/NO . RSTR: CORRECTIVE LENSES ORGAN DONOR: NO STATUS: LICENSE IS VALID ** NO MORE RECORDS - END RESPONSE

ML0138545 DCFBIWAX3

DR.NMNSP0000 13:52 03/28/97 03697_

MESSAGE AT 1550 ON 3/28/97 ACCEPTED

.

NL0138545. DQ. DCFBIWAX3. NN. TXT NAM/PESHO, LUCY. DOB/082433. SEX/F

MetroNet(tm) PC Standard Search System PAGE: Search Date: 03/28/97 LIST: 3 Request Number: 3 of 5 Search Result Input Request MULTI - FAMILY DWELLING b6 b7C (000) 000-0000 Search Result Return Codes: Primary: House # no match (nearest house # or multi-family dwelling). C.O.A. requested - none found. N.C.O.A. requested but not furnished - member of a batch < 100. **DEMOGRAPHICS:** Head of House's Date of Birth: Not Available Dwelling: 20-49 Units Gender: Unknown Length of Residence: 00 Median Family Income \$21,300 Wealth Rating is E Home Value Index 067 Median Home Value \$46,700 Other Household Members: 10 Nearbys Returned. 2. Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 03 Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 03 4. Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 12 Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 07 6. b6 b7C Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 04 Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 04 8. Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 12 Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 03 10.

Dwelling: 10-19 Units Length: 10

1.

3.

5.

7.

9.

Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 03

******* FBI, BUTTE ITC-INVESTIGATIVE INFORMATION SERVICES

******* Dept: DEPARTMENT1 / Queued by: SUPERVISOR ***********

DATE:03-28-1997 TIME:13:13:39 SUBJECT ID:SOCIAL SEARCH

9-410040627, V-06/042/6.30

PAGE 1 DATE 3-28-97 TIME 14:17:33 PCB45 V301

STEVEN T MCCARTER 7065 BENEDUCT DR DALLAS TX 75248

RPTD: 10-95

SS: 410-04-0627

YOB: 1956

END -- TRW SOCIAL SEARCH

DATE:03-28-1997 TIME:13:11:14 SUBJECT ID:DTEC

DTEC-410-04-0627.

SSN ISSUED -72 STATE ISSUED-TN

51 NO RECORD FOUND&

END OF REPORT EQUIFAX AND AFFILIATES - 03/28/97

MetroNet(tm) PC

Standard Search System

PAGE:

6

LIST: 1

Request Number: 6 of 8

Search Date: 03/28/97

Original Input:

b6 b7C

Search Result Return Codes:

Primary: Address search, no match.

C.O.A. requested - none found.

N.C.O.A. requested but not furnished - member of a batch < 100.

```
TXT

******* HEW MEXICO DRIVERS LICENSE INQUIRY *******

FESHO, LUCY, E

A509 MONTGENERY NW, ALBUQUERQUE, NM, 87107

SEX/F. DOB/082433. HGT/505. WGT/140. EYE/BRO.

SOC/521386123. OLN/037157759. EXP/092497

OLT/CLASS D . MOTORCYCLE ENDORSEMENT/NO.

RSTR:NONE

ORGAN DONOR:NO
STATUS:LICENSE IS VALID

* NO MORE RECORDS - END RESPONSE
```

ML0138545.DO.DCFBIWAX3.CO.TXT NAM/SANDOE, MICHAEL.DOB/070371.SEX/M

```
NL0138545
DCFBIWAX3
MESSAGE AT 1550 ON 3/28/97 ACCEPTED
```

13:52 03/28/97 04469 13:52 03/28/97 00518 DCFBIWAX3 TXT QUERY ON: NAM/SANDOE, MICHAEL

DR. CODMV0000

ON: NAM/SANDOE, NICHAEL DOB/07031971

*** CCIC INFO MAY BE USED FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE PURPOSES ONLY ***

*** ONLY COLORADO DNV FILES WERE SEARCHED - COLORADO PIN = OLN ***

STATE OF COLORADO

MetroNet(tm) PC Standard Search System PAGE: 03/28/97 LIST: 3 Search Date: Request Number: 4 of 5 Search Result Input Request NEAREST HOUSE # FOUND **b6** b7C (000) 000-0000 Search Result Return Codes: Primary: House # no match (nearest house # or multi-family dwelling). C.O.A. requested - none found. N.C.O.A. requested but not furnished - member of a batch < 100. **DEMOGRAPHICS:** Head of House's Date of Birth: Not Available Dwelling: Not Known Length of Residence: 00 Gender: Unknown Median Family Income \$33,100 Wealth Rating is D Median Home Value \$80,500 Home Value Index 115 Other Household Members: 10 Nearbys Returned. 2. Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 03 Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 03 4. Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 04 Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 08 6. b6 b7C Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 04 Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 05

8.

10.

Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 21

Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 15

1

3.

5.

7.

9.

Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 06

Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 03

SS: 521-38-6123

DATE:03-28-1997 TIME:13:13:58 SUBJECT ID:SOCIAL SEARCH

9-521386123, V-06/042/6.30

PAGE 1 DATE 3-28-97 TIME 14:17:52 PCB45 V701

LUCY E PESHO 4509 MONTGOMERY NE BLVD ALBUQUERQUE NM 87109-1216

RPTD: 1-96 TO 3-96

END -- TRW SOCIAL SEARCH

长3

************ Dept: DEPARTMENT1 / Queued by: SUPERVISOR *************

DATE:03-28-1997 TIME:13:11:38 SUBJECT ID:DTEC

DTEC-521-38-6123.

DATE ISSUED PRIOR-1951 STATE ISSUED-CO

M1 OF 1 NM-PESHO, LUCY, E CA-4509, MONTGOMERY, BLVD NE, ALBUQUERQUE, NM, 87109, 01/96 SS-521-38-6123 &

END OF REPORT EQUIFAX AND AFFILIATES - 03/28/97

MetroNet(tm) PC Standard Search System PAGE: 7 03/28/97 Search Date: LIST: 1 Request Number: 7 of 8 Input Request Search Result NEAREST HOUSE # FOUND b6 b7C (000) 000-0000 Search Result Return Codes: Primary: House # no match (nearest house # or multi-family dwelling). C.O.A. requested - none found. N.C.O.A. requested but not furnished - member of a batch < 100. DEMOGRAPHICS: Head of House's Date of Birth: Not Available Dwelling: Not Known Gender: Unknown Length of Residence: 00 Median Family Income \$33,100 Wealth Rating is D Home Value Index 115 Median Home Value \$80,500 Other Household Members: 10 Nearbys Returned. 2. Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 03 Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 03 4. Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 08 Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 04 6. 5. b6 b7C Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 05 Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 04 8. Length: 06 Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 21 Dwelling: 20-49 Units

10.

Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 15

1

3.

7.

9.

Dwelling: 20-49 Units Length: 03

COLORADO DRIVER RECORD

MI/CHAEL BARR SANDOE

1750 30TH ST

EOULDER

4 CO 80301

DATE: 03/28/1997 TIME: 13:50:42

ALÌAS:

COLORADO PIN: 96-004-0694 SSN: 000-00-0000 CDL CLASS: LICENSE NUMBER: 960040694 LICENSE TYPE: REGULAR ADULT LICENS HEIGHT: 5 10 WEIGHT: 130 ISSUE DATE: 01/04/1996

HAI

R: BLOND EYES: BLUE EXPIRATION: 07/03/2001 DONOR: N SEX: MALE BIRTH DATE: 07/03/1971

ENDORSEMENTS: NONE

RESTRICTIONS:

PREVIOUS STATE AND LICENSE:

UT 158152810

REGULAR LICENSE STATUS: VALID

COMMERCIAL LICENSE STATUS: NOT APPLICABLE

MLØ138545.DQ.DCFBIWAX3.AZ.TXT NAM/WELCH, GORDON.DOB/022347.SEX/M

ML0138545 DCFBIWAX3 MESSAGE AT 1551 ON 3/28/97 ACCEPTED

DR. AZMVDPX00 13:52 03/28/97 05411 13:52 03/28/97 00519 DCFBIWAX3 NAM/WELCH, GORDON.DOB/022347.SEX/N. NO RECORD FOUND

MetroNet(tm) PC	Standard Search System	PAGE: 5
LIST: 3 Request Number: 5 of 5	Search Date:	03/28/97

.		
Search Result	Input Request	
NEAREST HOUSE # FOUND		
	l l	6

Search Result Return Codes:

Primary: House # no match (nearest house # or multi-family dwelling). C.O.A. requested - none found.

N.C.O.A. requested but not furnished - member of a batch < 100.

DEMOGRAPHICS:

(000) 000-0000

Head of House's Date of Birth: Not Available

Dwelling: Not Known

Gender: Unknown
Median Family Income \$37,700

Length of Residence: 00

Wealth Rating is D

Home Value Index 100

Median Home Value \$82,300

b7C

Percentage of owner occupied households is 94.

Other Household Members:

10 Nearbys Returned.

1.]	2.					
	Dwelling: Single	Length: 15		Dwelling:	4 Units	Length:	06	
3.			4.					
l	Dwelling: 3 Units	Length: 04		Dwelling:	4 Units	Length:	08	
5.			6.					b6 b7С
L	Dwelling: 4 Units	Length: 04		Dwelling:	4 Units	Length:	02	
7.			8.					
	Dwelling: 4 Units	Length: 15		Dwelling:	8 Units	 Length: 	04	
9.			10.					
	Dwelling: 8 Units	Length: 02		Dwelling:	8 Units	∟ Length:	02	

FBI, BUTTE ITC-INVESTIGATIVE INFORMATION SERVICES

******** Dept: DEPARTMENT1 / Queued by: SUPERVISOR ************

DATE:03-28-1997 TIME:13:14:04 SUBJECT ID:SOCIAL SEARCH

9-224350705, V-06/042/6.30

PAGE 1 DATE 3-28-97 TIME 14:17:57 PCB45 V601

MICHAEL B SANDOE 301 THELMA DR # 236 CASPER WY 82609-2325

SS: 224-35-0705 YOB: 1971

RPTD: 6-95 TO 9-95

22320 GREEN VLG ABINGDON VA 24210-1838 RPTD: 12-94 TO 1-95

RR 8 BOX 195 ABINGDON VA 24210-9808 RPTD: 2-92 TO 3-93

END -- TRW SOCIAL SEARCH

********** Dept: DEPARTMENT1 / Queued by: SUPERVISOR ************

DATE: 03-28-1997 TIME: 13:11:46 SUBJECT ID: DTEC

DTEC-224-35-0705.

SSN ISSUED -85 STATE ISSUED-VA

M1 OF 1 NM-SANDOE, MICHAEL, B CA-301, THELMA, DR APT 236, CASPER, WY, 82609, 06/95 FA-22320, GREEN VLG, ABINGDON, VA, 24210, 06/94 SS-224-35-0705 &

END OF REPORT EQUIFAX AND AFFILIATES - 03/28/97

MetroNet(tm) PC	Standard Search System PAGE: 8
LIST: 1 Request Number: 8 of 8	Search Date: 03/28/97
Search Result MULTI - FAMILY DWELLING (000) 000-0000	Input Request b6 b7c
Search Result Return Codes: Primary: House # no match (neares C.O.A. requested - none found. N.C.O.A. requested but not furnis	t house # or multi-family dwelling). hed - member of a batch < 100.
Median Family Income \$41,300	Available Length of Residence: 00 Wealth Rating is C Median Home Value \$67,000
Other Household Members:	
10 Nearbys	Returned.
	2.
Dwelling: 3 Units Length: 02	Dwelling: Single Length: 04
	4.
Dwelling: Single Length: 08	Dwelling: Single Length: 03
	6. b6 b70
Dwelling: Single Length: 07	Dwelling: Single Length: 08
	8.

10.

Dwelling: Single

Dwelling: Single Length: 18

Length: 24

7.

9.

Dwelling: Duplex Length: 09

Dwelling: Single Length: 08

LEV 1 - 1 OF 1 DOCUMENT

* * * THIS DATA IS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY * * *

PERSON LOCATOR

Name: SANDOE, MICHAEL B

Current Address: 301 THELMA DRIVE APT. 236, CASPER, WY 82609

Previous Addresses: 22320 GREEN VLG

ABINGDON, VA 24210

5850 BELT LINE ROAD APT. 2003

DALLAS, TX 75240

Birthdate: 7/1971

On File Since: 11/1/1991

Case ID:	1A Envelope	b7E
î sd	1 Î FD-597 FOR 81 FLOPPY DISKS RECEIVED FROM SDSO	 Î
î sd	2 Î NOTES RE BACK UP OF HARD DRIVES	Î
î sd	3 Î DECENDENTS' IDENTIFYING INFO	Î
î sd	4 Î FD 441A FOR 1B (1)	Î
î sd	5 Î FD192 PACKAGE COPY FOR 1B(1)	Î
, Î SD		 Î
 Î SD	7 Î FD597 FOR COMPUTER DISKS TURNED OVER TO SDSO	 Î
 Î SD	8 Î LIST OF DECENDENTS AND KEY NAMES ASSOCIATED WITH GROUP	 Î
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%(06/01/1995)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Precedence:	IMMEDIATE	Date	e: 03/28/1997
To: San Dieg	go Attn	12	ь6 ь7с
Cor	ITC vestigative Information ntact:	Services Center (406)496-3822	(IISC)
Approved By:			b6
Drafted By:			b7C
Case ID #:	(Pending)	•	b7E
Title: recor	rd #132625		
Synopsis: Da	atabase searches conduct	ed by the Butte	ITC
results of ir is a copy of	Attached are copies of nquiries conducted by th an accomplishment/reply ne IISC accomplishments	e Butte ITC. Al	lso attached equested that
issued in	Her most current addr	associated with ess is located a	
Color L	VELETE LEAD 4/1/97 VELETE LEAD 4/1/97 VOICE SENT	in	
A CONTRACTOR OF THE PROPERTY O	1	SEARCH	APR 01 1997 671 FBI-SAN DIEGO

To:	San Diego	From	•		
Re:			03/28/1997	p	71

LEAD(s):

Set Lead 1:

SAN DIEGO

AT SAN DIEGO

Complete and return reply form to Butte ITC for this request.

**



INVESTIGATIVE INFORMATION REQUEST FORM

FBI, Butte Information 400 North Main Strands Butte, Montana 597 ▶ Commercial Telephone (406) 782 ▶ FTS: (406) 782-2304 FAX: (406) ▶ Secure FAX & STU III: (406) 782 TO: FBI, BUTTE INFORMATION Date: 3 186	701 2-2304 5) 782-9504,782-9507 & 782-7418 82-2304,Ext. 26 N TECHNOLOGY CENTER	ITC Use Only: BITC Record #: 32 (025 16:00 am pm pm pm pm pm pm pm
	-	
Office/DA:	rnone #: FAX	H: 69-4955956 UCFN (UCFN (File #) is Required) be cince: ROUTINE IMMEDIATE IMMEDIATE
J		(Emergency/Crisis Situation)
	h additional sheets if necessary)	
Name - Last:	First:	Middle:
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City/State:	Zip: Ph	one: Business ID#:
☐ 1. Specific Information Des	H PARAMETERS (Please check sired	only those that are needed)
☐ 2. Determine All Individua	als Associated with Social Security	Number(s)
 □ 3. Report Validity of Socia □ 4. Determine Who is Associa □ 5. Determine Address of B □ 6. Determine Property Own □ 7. Determine Who Owns P □ 8. Determine Who Resides □ 9. Determine Financial Bac 	Il Security Number ciated with Telephone Number(s) cusiness/Person (U.S ned by Individual (U.S Property Listed Above at Address Listed Above	, State(s)), State(s)) udgments, Liens, UCC filings, or Lawsuits or, Registered Agent
11 Customs Rorder Crossi	ngs / Subject query / I O/ info /o	(Person/Business)
 □ 11. Customs Border Crosss □ 12. Federal Prison Inmate 1 □ 13. Telemarketing Complai 		ircie one)
Return Reply To: SAC, Attention: Ba Possible	used on search criteria, marked records ar e Identifiable Records	b6 b7c

.03T3F

MAIL-IT REQUESTED: MARCH 28, 1997

CLIENT:

LIBRARY: FINDER FILE: P-TRAK

YOUR SEARCH REQUEST AT THE TIME THIS MAIL-IT WAS REQUESTED:

b6 b7C

NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS FOUND WITH YOUR REQUEST THROUGH

LEVEL 1

LEVEL

1 PRINTED

DISPLAY FORMAT: FULL

SEND TO: BUTTE, 17

FBI

400 N. MAIN STŘEET

BUTTE MONTANA 59701-8866

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FBI

TRANSMIT VIA: X Teletype ☐ Facsimile ☐ AIRTEL	PRECEDENCE: ☑ Immediate □ Priority □ Routine	CLASSIFICATION: TOP SECRET SECRET CONFIDENTIAL	
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		Date 3/28/97	
FM FBI SAN DIEGO) (P)		b7E
TO DIRECTOR FBI/IMM	EDIATE/		
ALL FIELD OFFICES/I	MMEDIATE/		
BUTTE INFORMATION T	ECHNOLOGY CENTER/I	MMEDIATE/	
BT			
UNCLAS			
CITE: //3780:SQ4//			
PASS: NSD FOR UNIT	' CHIEF	CID FOR VCMO AND SIOC;	
TD FOR CIRG, SSA	PROFII	ING AND BEHAVIORAL	b6 b7С
ASSESSMENT UNIT; BA	LTIMORE FOR SA	CALVERTON	
RESIDENT AGENCY.			
SUBJECT: HEAVENS G	ATE, 18241 COLINA	NORTE, RANCHO SANTA FE,	
CALIFORNIA; MASS SU	ICIDE OF THIRTY NI	TNE INDIVIDUALS, MARCH 26,	
1997; ACTS OF TERRO	RISM-DOMESTIC TERR	CORISTS-VIOLENT CRIMES;	
PRELIMINARY INQUIRY	; OO: SAN DIEGO.		
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FOX DATE & TIME OF A	CCEPTANCE: 28/3	197 2350/df	

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REFERENCE SAN DIEGO TELETYPE TO THE DIRECTOR DATED MARCH	
27, 1997 AND SAN DIEGO SSRA TEL CALL TO UNIT	
CHIEF NSD MARCH 28, 1997 AND TEL CALL TO SA	ь6 ь7С
BALTIMORE, CALVERTON RESIDENT AGENCY ON MARCH 28,	
1997.	
REFERENCED TELETYPE PROVIDED INFORMATION THAT SAN DIEGO	
HAD INITIATED A PRELIMINARY INQUIRY INTO CAPTIONED MATTER AND	
HAD OFFERED FBI ASSISTANCE TO THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S	
OFFICE IN THE INVESTIGATION OF THIS MATTER.	
ON MARCH 28, 1997, UNDERSHERIFF SAN DIEGO	b 6
COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, CONTACTED ACTING SAC GRANT D. ASHLEY	b7C
AND REQUESTED ASSISTANCE IN IDENTIFYING AND LOCATING THE NEXT	
OF KIN OF FIFTEEN OF THE DECEASED.	
FURTHER CONTACT WITH DOCTOR SAN DIEGO	
COUNTY DETERMINED THAT ALTHOUGH THE	
DECEASED BODIES CONTAINED VARIOUS FORMS OF IDENTIFICATION TO	b6
INCLUDE DRIVER LICENSES, SOCIAL SECURITY ACCOUNT NUMBERS,	b7C
DATES OF BIRTH, PASSPORTS, ETC., THE MEDICAL EXAMINER HAS NO	
WAY OF DETERMINING THE NEXT OF KIN. DOCTOR	
ADVISED THAT THROUGH THE RECEIPT OF NUMEROUS TELEPHONE CALLS	

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THE NEXT C	F KIN OF AI	LL THE DECEASED HAD BEEN NOTIFIED EXCEPT	
FOR FIFTEE	en. doctor	REQUESTED FBI ASSISTANCE IN	b6 b70
LOCATING T	HE NEXT OF	KIN THROUGH THE IDENTIFICATION PROVIDED.	570

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IT IS REQUESTED THAT FBIHO, THROUGH ESTABLISHED SOURCES, PARTICULARLY BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT, SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION, IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE, U.S. CUSTOMS SERVICE, OBTAIN AND REVIEW ANY INFORMATION THAT MAY LEAD TO THE IDENTITY OF RELATIVES OF THE DECEASED. BALTIMORE IS REQUESTED TO MAKE APPROPRIATE CONTACT WITH THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION IN ORDER THAT SOCIAL SECURITY FORM SS5 CAN BE REVIEWED FOR INFORMATION WHICH MAY LEAD TO THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE NEXT OF KIN. THE BUTTE TECHNOLOGY CENTER IS REQUESTED TO CONDUCT RECORD CHECKS ON THE DECEASED WITH AN EFFORT TOWARD DETERMINING ANY INFORMATION THAT MAY LEAD TO A RELATIVE. ITEMS OF PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION WILL BE FAXED UNDER SEPARATE COVER TO NSD, BALTIMORE, AND THE BUTTE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CENTER.

FOR INFORMATION OF RECEIVING OFFICES, ANY INQUIRIES REGARDING IDENTIFICATION OF DECEASED INDIVIDUALS CAN BE MADE THROUGH THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE AT

^PAGE 4 SD	(P) UNCLAS	b7E
THEIR 24-HOUR NUMBER (619	9) 694-2895. INFORMATION WILL ONLY BE	
GIVEN OUT TO THE NEXT OF	KIN. SAN DIEGO POINT OF CONTACT FOR	
THIS INVESTIGATION IS SSF	OR SA	b6
NORTH COUNTY RES	SIDENT AGENCY, AT	b70
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FD-448 (Rev 6/1/91)



FBI FACSIMILE COVERSHEET

PRECEDENCE Immediate Priority Routine	CLASSIFICATIO Top Secret Secret Confidential Sensitive Unclassified	Time Transm Sender's Init	nitted: lals: lages:	
To: SAN DIELO FB- (Name of Office)	<u> </u>	Date: _	3-28-97	
Attn: De (Name	Room Telephone)			ъ6 ъ7С
From: SEA (Name of Office)				
Subject:			.	
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Special Handling Inst	ructions: Punse Pa	DE AT		
			ber Much !!!	b6 b7С
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Approved:				LRI\DO:

FD-36 (Rev. 8-29-85)

FM FBI SAN DIEGO (F) b7E TO DIRECTOR FBI/IMMEDIATE/ ALL FIELD OFFICES/IMMEDIATE/ BUTTE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CENTER/IMMEDIATE/ BT UNCLAS CITE: //3780: SQ 4// PASS: NSD FOR UNIT CHIEF CID FOR VCMO AND SICC; TD FOR CIRG, SSA FROFILING AND BEHAVIORAL B6/7C ASSESSMENT UNIT; BALTIMORE FOR SA CALVERTON RESIDENT AGENCY. SUBJECT: HEAVENS GATE, 18241 COLINA NORTE, RANCHO SANTA FE, CALIFORNIA; MASS SUICIDE OF THIRTY NINE INDIVIDUALS, MARCH 26, 1997; ACTS OF TERRORISM-DOMESTIC TERRORISTS-VIOLENT CRIMES; PRELIMINARY INQUIRY; OO: SAN DIEGO Approved: Original filename: Time Received: Telprep filename: MRI/JULIAN DATE: ISN:	TRANSMIT VIA: Teletype Facsimile AIRTEL	PRECEDENCE: Immediate Priority Routine	CLASSIFICATION: TOP SECRET SECRET CONFIDENTIAL UNCLAS E F T O UNCLAS Date 3/28/97	
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REFERENCE SAN DIEGO TELETYPE TO THE DIRECTOR DATED MARCH	
27, 1997 AND SAN DIEGO SSRA TEL CALL TO UNIT	b 6
CHIEF NSD MARCH 28, 1997 AND TEL CALL TO SA	∙b7C
, BALTIMORE, CALVERTON RESIDENT AGENCY ON MARCH 28,	
1997.	
REFERENCED TELETYPE PROVIDED INFORMATION THAT SAN DIEGO	
HAD INITIATED A PRELIMINARY INQUIRY INTO CAPTIONED MATTER AND	
HAD OFFERED FBI ASSISTANCE TO THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S	
OFFICE IN THE INVESTIGATION OF THIS MATTER.	
ON MARCH 28, 1997, UNDERSHERIFF SAN DIEGO	b6 b7С
COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, CONTACTED ACTING SAC GRANT D. ASHLEY	2.0
AND REQUESTED ASSISTANCE IN IDENTIFYING AND LOCATING THE NEXT	
OF KIN OF FIFTEEN OF THE DECEASED.	
FURTHER CONTACT WITH DOCTOR SAN DIEGO	
COUNTY DETERMINED THAT ALTHOUGH THE	
DECEASED BODIES CONTAINED VARIOUS FORMS OF IDENTIFICATION TO	b6 b7C
INCLUDE DRIVER LICENSES, SOCIAL SECURITY ACCOUNT NUMBERS,	
DATES OF BIRTH, PASSPORTS, ETC., THE MEDICAL EXAMINER HAS NO	
WAY OF DETERMINING THE NEXT OF KIN. DOCTOR	
ADVISED THAT THROUGH THE RECEIPT OF NUMEROUS TELEPHONE CALLS,	

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THE NEXT OF KIN OF ALL THE DECEASED HAD BEEN NOTIFIED EXCEPT REQUESTED FBI ASSISTANCE IN DOCTOR FOR FIFTEEN. LOCATING THE NEXT OF KIN THROUGH THE IDENTIFICATION PROVIDED. IT IS REQUESTED THAT FBIHQ, THROUGH ESTABLISHED SOURCES, PARTICULARLY BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT, SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION, IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE, U.S. CUSTOMS SERVICE, OBTAIN AND REVIEW ANY INFORMATION THAT MAY LEAD TO THE IDENTITY OF RELATIVES OF THE INFORMATION THAT MAY LEAD TO THE IDENTITY OF RELATIVES OF THE DECEASED. BALTIMORE IS REQUESTED TO MAKE WALTEMBER DO RECHESTED TO MAKE APPROPRIATE CONTACT 7.744-24-44-64-64-1 WITH THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION IN ORDER THAT SOCIAL SECURITY FORM SS5 CAN BE REVIEWED FOR INFORMATION WHICH MAY LEAD TO THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE NEXT OF KIN. TECHNOLOGY CENTER IS PROJECTED TO CONDICT RECORD CHECKS ON THE DECEASED WITH AN EFFORT TOWARD DETERMINING ANY INFORMATION ITEMS OF PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION THAT MAY LEAD TO A RELATIVE. WILL BE FAXED UNDER SEPARATE COVER TO NSD, BALTIMORE, AND THE

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REGARDING IDENTIFICATION OF DECEASED INDIVIDUALS CAN BE MADE
THROUGH THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE AT

BUTTE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CENTER.

THEIR 24-HOUR NUMBER (619) L	194-2895, INFORMATION
WILL ONLY BE GIVEN OUT TO TH	E NEXT OF KIN.
SAN DIEGO POINT OF CONTACT FO	OR THIS INVESTIGATION
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	1997; ACTS OF TERRORIS	SM-DOMESTIC TER	RORISTS-VIOLENT	CRIMES;	
	PRELIMINARY INQUIRY;	OO: SAN DIEGO			
	REFERENCE SAN DII	EGO ACTING SPEC	IAL AGENT IN CH	ARGE GRANT	
	D. ASHLEY'S TEL CALL	TO SIOC, MARCH	26, 1997.		•
	SAN DIEGO HAS IN	ITIATED A PRELI	MINARY INQUIRY	INTO	
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	FOX DATE & TIME OF ACCI	EPTANCE:	3/27/97 555	ACCHED WAY FIL	DEXED

HUMAN LIFE, THE PROVEN ABILITY TO EFFECT SUICIDE ON A LARGE SCALE, AND POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF MASS SUICIDES IN OTHER LOCATIONS.

AT 1:30 P.M., MARCH 26, 1997, THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY

SHERIFF'S OFFICE (SDSO) RECEIVED AN ANONYMOUS CALL REQUESTING
A CHECK OF THE OCCUPANTS' WELFARE AT 18241 COLINA NORTE,
RANCHO SANTA FE, CALIFORNIA. SDSO DEPUTIES RESPONDED AT 3:30
P.M. AND DISCOVERED THIRTY NINE DEAD BODIES IN VARIOUS ROOMS
OF THE RESIDENCE. THERE WERE NO SIGNS OF TRAUMA OR FORCED
ENTRY. SEVERAL AIR PURIFIERS WERE OPERATING IN THE HOUSE. THE
BODIES WERE FOUND LYING FACE UP ON MATTRESSES AND COTS
THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE, INCLUDING IN EACH OF THE SEVEN BEDROOMS.
EACH BODY WAS CLAD IN NEW BLACK NIKE TENNIS SHOES AND BLACK
PANTS. EACH DECEDENT'S SHIRT HAD A TRIANGULAR PATCH ON THE
LEFT SHOULDER BEARING THE INSCRIPTION, "HEAVEN'S GATE AWAY
TEAM." ALL BODIES HAD SHORT HAIR AND A GOLD BAND ON THE LEFT
RING FINGER. EACH BODY WAS ACCOMPANIED BY A PASSPORT.

SDSO HAS IDENTIFIED ALL DECEDENTS WHO APPEAR TO BE FROM THE SOUTHWEST AREA OF THE UNITED STATES.

THIRTY SEVEN BODIES WERE PARTIALLY DRAPED WITH TRIANGULAR PIECES OF PURPLE CLOTH. THE TOP POINT OF THE TRIANGLE COVERED THE HEAD OF EACH BODY, WITH THE OTHER TWO POINTS EXTENDING COVERAGE FROM SHOULDER TO SHOULDER. THE ARMS OF THESE CORPSES

^PAGE 3 SD UNCLAS

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LAY BY THEIR SIDES AND EACH BODY HAD AN INDIVIDUAL, SMALL TOTE BAG ALONGSIDE, CONTAINING VARIOUS PERSONAL ITEMS. TWO FEMALE BODIES HAD PLASTIC BAGS COVERING THEIR HEADS, WITH THEIR HANDS CLUTCHING THE BOTTOM OF THE BAGS.

SEVERAL CUPS CONTAINING AN ORANGE LIQUID AND SEVERAL

MEDICINE BOTTLES WITH LABELS PARTIALLY REMOVED WERE DISCOVERED

IN THE NORTHWEST BEDROOM OF THE HOUSE. SDSO HOMICIDE SERGEANT

ADVISED THAT THE ORANGE LIQUID HAS PRELIMINARILY

TESTED POSITIVE FOR VICODIN. A FORMER MEMBER OF THE GROUP

ADVISED THEY PROBABLY DIED OF AN OVERDOSE OF BARBITURATES.

INVESTIGATION DETERMINED THE GROUP WAS CALLED "HEAVEN'S GATE" AND FORMERLY WENT BY THE NAME "UFO GROUP."

THE THIRTY NINE DEATHS APPEARED TO HAVE OCCURRED OVER AN SEVERAL DAYS. SDSO HOMICIDE HAS SPECULATED THAT THE TWO FEMALES WHOSE HEADS WERE COVERED IN PLASTIC BAGS WERE THE LAST TO DIE, AFTER THEY PLACED THE PURPLE SHROUDS ON THE OTHER BODIES.

SDSO RECOVERED NUMEROUS LETTERS, VIDEOS, PAMPHLETS AND PHOTOS THAT INDICATE THE GROUP PLANNED AN "EXIT FROM THIS LIFE TO ANOTHER EXISTENCE." THESE MATERIALS ALSO DISCLOSED THE

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^PAGE 4 SD UNCLAS

GROUP'S BELIEF THAT THE HUMAN BODY IS A SHELL AND, AT SOME POINT IN LIFE, EVERYONE MUST DECIDE TO MOVE TO A HIGHER PLANE, TO TRANSITION TO A HIGHER LEVEL OF EXISTENCE.

SEVERAL COMPUTERS WERE INSIDE THE RESIDENCE, INCLUDING ONE WHICH BORE THE FOLLOWING SCREEN SAVER FEATURE, "RED ALERT HALE BOPP HEAVEN'S GATE." UNCONFIRMED REPORTS INDICATE THE GROUP'S MOST RECENT WEB SITE WAS, "HTTP://WWW.NEW HORIZON.COM"

ON THE EVENING OF MARCH 26, 1997, SDSO HOMICIDE

INTERVIEWED THE CALLER WHO HAD REQUESTED THE WELFARE CHECK AT

18241 COLINA NORTE. THAT INDIVIDUAL, A FORMER MEMBER OF

HEAVEN'S GATE, ADVISED THAT HE RECEIVED A LETTER AND A VIDEO

FROM GROUP MEMBERS AT HIS HOME IN THE LOS ANGELES AREA ON

MARCH 25, 1997. IN THE VIDEO, SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE GROUP

WERE RECORDED SAYING GOODBYE. SDSO HAS ALSO LEARNED THAT

VIDEOS/LETTERS WERE SENT BY HEAVEN'S GATE MEMBERS TO OTHER

RECIPIENTS VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE UNITED

STATES.

SDSO ADVISED THAT, TO DATE, HE HAS NO
EVIDENCE TO INDICATE THAT HEAVEN'S GATE IS AFFILIATED WITH ANY
OTHER CULT, SECT OR ORGANIZATION. CHECKS OF SAN DIEGO INDICES

b6 b7C

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AND AUTOMATED CASE SYSTEMS UNIVERSAL NAME INDEX FOR HEAVEN'S	
GATE WERE NEGATIVE.	
SAN DIEGO ACTING SAC GRANT D. ASHLEY HAS SPOKEN WITH SDSO	
UNDERSHERIFF AND HAS OFFERED THE SERVICES OF THE	b 6
FBI, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, CONDUCTING INDICES AND	b7C
IDENTIFICATION CHECKS, PROVIDING FORENSIC ASSISTANCE,	
CONDUCTING INTERNATIONAL LEADS, PROVIDING THE SERVICES OF THE	
COMPUTER ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE TEAM, AND PROVIDING ASSISTANCE	
FROM THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE UNIT AT QUANTICO.	
FOR INFO OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE UNIT, THE SDSO CONTACT FOR	
CULT INVESTIGATIONS IS DETECTIVE CRIMINAL	b6
INTELLIGENCE DETAIL,	b70
SAN DIEGO WILL ADVISE FBIHQ OF THE IDENTITIES OF THE	
DECEASED AND ANY FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.	
BT	

Deaths Seem to Fit Cult Pattern, Experts Say

By TERENCE MONMANEY and LARRY B. STAMMER TIMES STAFF WRITERS

Mystery shrouded the deaths, but there were also telling signs. The dozens of young men were dressed in black slacks, lying on their backs throughout the hillside mansion, neither trauma nor blood nor struggle in evidence.

Whether the 39 people found in a Rancho Santa Fe house died in an orchestrated suicide or fell prey to mass murder wasn't clear late Wednesday. But the victims, said by the homeowner's attorney to belong to an extreme religious group calling itself the W.W. Higher Source, would appear to have participated in a mass suicide, cult authorities and suicide experts said.

Carl Raschke, a well-known University of Denver cult watcher and author of a book on the links between the occult, violence and terrorism, speculated that W.W. Higher Source is a neo-Gnostic cult, based on its name and the fact that the victims were all male and wore black.

Gnostics going back to biblical times believed in a secret, revealed wisdom which is accessible only to those in the sect. Since the com-

Please see DEATHS, A30

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A1 Los Angeles Times Los Angeles, CA

Date: Edition:

Thursday, 3/27/97

Title:

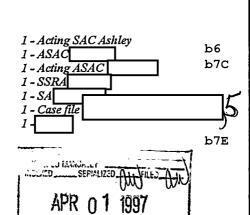
"Deaths Seem to Fit Cult Pttern, Experts Say"

Character: or Classification:

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DEATHS: Seem to Fit Cult Pattern, Experts Say

Continued from A1

plete translation into English in the late 1970s of the Nag Hammadi Library, first discovered in late 1945 on the west bank of the Nile River near Cairo, the number of groups claiming Gnostic roots has proliferated.

But if the group in Rancho Santa Fe is a neo-Gnostic group, as Raschke believes, there is no indication it is connected with any of the other groups, many of which can be found on the Internet.

"Everybody dressed in black starts to sound cult-like," Raschke said of the victims. "All-black attire is a sign of people who take their religion seriously." But he cautioned that it "could have been a mass murder as well."

Raschke noted that in the case of the deaths of members of the Solar Temple doomsday cult in France in 1994, some victims were later found to have been murdered, as were followers of Jim Jones in Guyana.

Raschke, who keeps close tabs on cults, said that he was told Wednesday morning by a cult insider that deaths—described as a "major series of transformations"—would occur "within the next few weeks."

The deaths would begin around Easter Sunday and accelerate with Buddha's birthday May 22, leading to "culminations" around the summer solstice, he was told.

Stephen O'Leary, a USC professor and author of "Arguing the Apocalypse," agreed that the Rancho Santa Fe deaths appeared to have cult overtones. "My guess is this has got to be some kind of religious manifestation. . . . In a mass suicide of any kind you have a high relationship to religious belief of some form or the other."

Robert Ellwood, professor of religion at USC and specialist on Eastern religions and unconventional religious groups, said he was "astounded" both by the deaths and the fact that they took place in

Deadly Cults

The beliefs and rituals of some cults have taken deadly turns, resulting in murder, suicide and confrontations with law enforcement and government authorities. Some notable incidents

- Nov. 18, 1978: More than 900 followers of the Rey. Jim Jones including many children, died in Jonestown, Guyana, in a mass murder-suicide that shocked the world.
- May 13; 1985: Eleven people were killed; including four children, and 250 were left homeless after a fire following an armed. confrontation between members of a cult group called MOVE and police in Philadelphia.
- Aug. 29; 1987: The bodies of 33 people linked to a religious cult in South Korea were found in a factory attic in an apparent suicide murder pact in the town of Yongin; about 50 miles south of Seoul.
- April 19, 1993: David Koresh and about 80 members of the Branch Davidian cult perished in an inferno at their Waco, Texas, compound.
- October 1994: In separate incidents in France and Canada, 53 members of an extremist sect known as the Order of the Solar Temple died in grisly murder suicide rituals.
- March 20, 1995: Deadly poison gas in Tokyo's subway killed 12 people and sickened about 5,500 commuters in an attack linked to a cult known as the Aum Supreme Truth.
- Dec. 23: 1995: The charred bodies of 16 cult members linked to the Order of the Solar Temple were found in a forest in southeastern France in a murder-suicide.
- March 23, 1997; Five followers of the Order of the Solar Temple died in an apparent group suicide in a small fown near Quebec. Canada.

Researched by NONA YATES and VICKY McCARGAR/Los Angeles Times

Southern California.

Like others attempting to piece together what happened and why based on a paucity of facts, Ellwood was cautious.

But the deaths, if they are the result of a mass suicide, can show the dark side of what he called a "private religious reality" that distorts the outside world.

"They're so bound up in ... their own religion that they don't see their own life. That can explain how a group can commit mass suicide because they have these

paranoid ideas of the world that is about to be destroyed or destroy them," Ellwood said.

"They are so wrapped up in the group they can't think of themselves apart from the group life," he added.

While there has been so far no mention of leadership, a strong leader can sway vulnerable people under such circumstances, according to Debbie Pine, director of the Maynard Bernstein Resource Center on Cults, which has ties to the Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles.

"Every cult is unique in its own way," she said. But a common characteristic is emotional or psychological manipulation of recruits. "But it could be another example of how vulnerable people are at risk when they subject themselves to leadership of someone who makes a promise of a better life, a better world when in most cases it's an illusion."

Psychologists pointed to other factors that are believed to incite a mass suicide. "When something like this happens, typically the individuals involved have very passive personalities," said psychologist Jay Nagdimon of the Didi Hirsch Suicide Prevention. Center in West Los Angeles. "Because their psychology is structured this way, it leaves them more vulnerable to be influenced by a charismatic leader."

Followers of such extremist cults "take on the wants of the leader or of the group, and that supersedes in some cases their own wish to live."

xperts took pains to distinguish between individual and mass or group suicide. "I would say that most [individual] suicide is a desire to escape intense psychological pain," Nagdimon said. "Mass suicide has more to do with external forces and the ability of a person's own individuality to decide for himself what he wants to do."

What the participant in a mass suicide and an individual suicide have in common is a state of what psychologist Edwin Shneidman called "perturbation."

Often the source of that agitation is a concept that Shneidman terms "psychache," which is a combination of emotions such as shame, guilt, loneliness, and hopelessness. Compounding that is a feeling that death is the only way out.

He did not think there was such a thing as a suicide pact among equals. "It's obvious that on occasion, rather infrequently, there are suicide pacts, but my view is they are never coequal. There is always coercion in it."

Sam Heilig, a psychiatric social worker in private practice in West Los Angeles who specializes in suicide, said that mass suicides and so-called copycat suicides occasionally have one thing in common fear. "There's a perceived threat from the outside world," he said. That was true of the Branch Davidian deaths in Waco, Texas, he said, where the threat was a menacing new world order. And it was true of a string of nine suicides over some weeks among youngsters a decade ago—an event he studied.

"They all had a belief that there was a spirit driving around in a big black car and they were all going to die," he said.

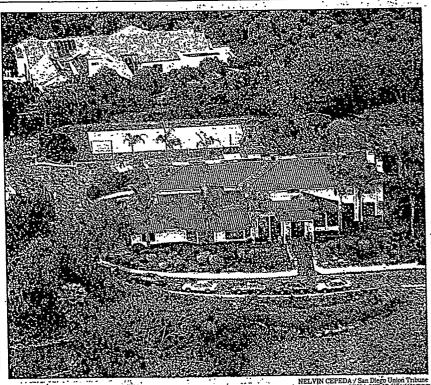
Rosemarie White, clinical director of the Institute for Suicide Prevention in Los Angeles, also suggested that the key to cult behavior was the complex interaction between leader and follower in an extremist cult. "The seducing aspects of the leader's teaching can lull members into a very distorted emotional space where they lose the ability to determine what is appropriate or not appropriate," she said. "So death becomes something to be welcomed for reasons that the leader explains."

Like many people struggling to understand the shocking incident in Rancho Santa Fe, Herbert Rosedale, a cult expert from the American Family Foundation, compared it to Jonestown and Waco. "It is not different than we have seen in other places. . . . We just seem to forget about them between these times.

"From my experience," he added, "people who get involved in destructive cults had a weak moment at which time they were susceptible to recruitment. . . . They are not dysfunctional people. They may be among the most idealistic, brightest people in the world."

Psychologists stressed that anyone considering committing suicide, or who knows of a loved one who is, should seek counseling. The suicide prevention center in West Los Angeles 24-hour counseling hotline number is (310) 391-1253.

39 Dead in Apparent Suicide Bodies Found in Rancho Santa Fe Mansion



Police found at least 39 bodies in this hilltop home in the posh neighborhood of Rancho Santa Fe

HORROR ON A HILLTOP

They lost count

-Sgt. Dan Crist, on the first officers' find

"They looked different. Not mean or anything like that, just different. They never said hi, just minded their own business."

> -Martine Tamayo, landscaper for neighbor

"We thought we were moving to paradise and nothing ever happened here."

-Carol Kappan,

■ Tragedy: Religious group called W.W. Higher Source reportedly had rented the house.

By TONY PERRY MICHAEL GRANBERRY and ANNE-MARIE O'CONNOR TIMES STAFF WRITERS

RANCHO SANTA FE, Calif.-Police found the bodies of 39 young men, apparently cult members who believed they were sent to Earth as angels, lying dead on their backs Wednesday in a luxurious home here—victims of what authorities said appeared to be a mass suicide.

The group they belonged to, called W.W. Higher Source, practiced celibacy and abstained from smoking and drinking, said Milt Silverman Jr., an attorney for the owner of the home where the men died. They were apparently cele-brating a "holy week" when they died, Silverman said.

But police said they found no apparent religious artifacts in their initial pass through the house Wednesday. Instead, they found bodies, scattered about the twostory home-many resting on beds or cots. The victims, who appeared to be white and Latino, did not look bloodied or bruised. Indeed, they looked so peaceful that one officer

said they appeared to be sleeping. None, however, showed any signs of life.

And there was no identification on any of the corpses. Nor was there a suicide note.

Deputies could not say Wednesday night how the men had died. They said all signs pointed to suicide but did not rule out that some victims could have been

"We don't know what we have yet," San Diego County Sheriff's Lt. Gerald Lipscomb said. "It appears to be a suicide, but it could be

something other than that."

The deputies also suggested that the body count of 39 was not definitive, as they had not finished searching the entire three-acre estate, which boasts tennis courts, a swimming pool, a sauna, a putting green and an indoor elevator.

Deputies approached the rambling ranch house after receiving an anonymous phone tip about a Please see GROUP, A31 Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

Los Angeles Times Los Angeles, CA

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mass suicide about 3:15 p.m. The first deputy to arrive entered through an open side door wearing a surgical mask and came across 10 bodies in the living room—all young men, all dressed in dark pants and dark sneakers, all lying peacefully on their backs. There was no sign of struggle and no indication of trauma.

Stunned and nearly overcome by what sheriff's Cmdr. Alan Fulmer described as a "pungent" smell, the deputy retreated and called for backup. Sheriff's officials did not describe the odor in the home in any detail, but said two deputies were getting blood tests.
"We want to have their blood checked to see if

[there is] any kind of substance that will tell us what happened," Lipscomb said.

The Sheriff's Department sent a hazardous materials team to investigate possible toxic fumes in the house late Wednesday.

As media helicopters roared overhead and sheriff's deputies congregated outside the residence on Colina Norte, neighbors culled their memories for any hint of something odd in the suddenly macabre hilltop house with the stunning ocean view.

Several said the only thing out of the ordinary they noticed in recent days were a few new vehicles, including a Ryder rental truck and a van. Most of the cars they had spotted coming and going from the house over the past several months had out-of-state license plates, they said, including at least one from New Mexico.

Property records show that Sam Koutchesfahani, the owner of Tan Trading and Consultant Group, bought the nine-bedroom, seven-bathroom home in May 1994 for \$1.325 million. He recently put the home on the market, reportedly asking \$1.6 million for it.

A real estate agent, who did not want to be named, said she tried to show the home to buyers but "there was always some sort of religion meeting going on."

Koutchesfahani pleaded guilty to tax evasion and fraud in U.S. District Court in San Diego last year. As part of the plea-bargain, he admitted that he set up a scheme to help foreign students from the Middle East remain in the United States by bribing community college officials to illegally enroll them and certify them as California residents, a federal official said. Koutchesfahani acknowledged that the scheme netted him up to \$350,000.

Koutchesfahani, now free on bail, is due to be sentenced in July. Federal officials said they are investigating whether there is a link between the fraud case and the suicides.

Silverman, Koutchesfahani's attorney, said the tenants ranged in age from 18 to 65. The oldest was called Father John; another leader was addressed as Brother

The group believe that members were sent to Earth as angels and described themselves as having met in the Midwest, with chapters in Arizona and New Mexico, Silverman said. The tenants requested that the house not be shown to prospective buyers this week because it was their holy week, Silverman said.

"They appeared to be peaceful, sincere, loving people," Silverman said.

Others familiar with the group said the men referred to their rented home as "our temple," and insisted that all visitors take off shoes and don surgical booties or socks. The mansion was stocked with bunk beds and several computers, and the tenants reportedly said they were developing a page for the World Wide Web.

Though all the victims were men, visitors to the home said they saw several women living there. They said the cult members-many of them in crew cuts-boasted that their temple was economically self-sufficient.

Rancho Santa Fe real estate agent Bob Dyson said

his agency showed the property a week ago.
"There were computers everywhere," Dyson said. "There were men and women, all had crew cuts, including the women. They were very android-like. They referred to each other as brother and sister."

Dyson said no one spoke except the group's leader, who said they were living in the home for free, paying

Cult experts said W.W. Higher Source appeared to be a neo-Gnostic group, meaning that its members believed in a sacred wisdom accessible only to a select few.

The Rancho Santa Fe group seemed to be heavily involved in computer programming. A Web site from a design company calling itself Higher Source boasts of a cadre of Internet designers that has worked closely for years, developing "know-how" through "personal discipline and a concerted effort." The Web site also proclaims: "We try to stay positive in any circumstance and put the good of a project above any personal concerns or artistic egos."—

Quiet Tenants

istraught neighbors said they knew an out-ofstate religious cult had been renting the ranch house since October. They reported that the residents of the house appeared to dress in uniform sometimes black, sometimes white—and called themselves monks.

When the group moved into the palm-fringed mansion on the Colina Norte cul-de-sac last fall,

neighbor Bill Strong said the home's owner told him: "Meet your new neighbors. They're going to be opening a monastery or a convent."

Another neighbor, Arnie Kappan, said the owner told him: "Look, if I can't sell the house, I'll rent it to a bunch of monks."

Strong and other neighbors described Koutchesfahani's tenants as quiet, private people who kept the shades drawn and rarely interacted—not unusual in a neighborhood that attracts people looking for posh

"They could not have been quieter, nicer neighbors," said Shelby Strong, who lives next door. "I suppose this could have been a good place to hide out," her husband, Bill Strong, said.

In a neighborhood so quiet you can hear cars crunching across gravel driveways, neighbors noticed oddities about the new tenants but were not bothered. Bill Strong said he never saw the men gardening or playing tennis, but once spotted several of them breakfasting at a local pancake house.

"You knew they weren't ordinary working people going to a job at 8 in the morning. They didn't have a regular schedule," Strong said. But he added that

The men reportedly referred to their rented home as 'our temple,' and insisted that all visitors take off shoes and don surgical booties or socks. The mansion was stocked with bunk beds and several computers, and the tenants were said to be developing a page for the World Wide Web.

As media helicopters roared overhead and sheriff's deputies congregated outside the residence on Colina Norte, neighbors culled their memories for any hint of something odd in the suddenly macabre hilltop house with the stunning ocean view.

"they certain diant disturb any of the neighbors

here. There was nothing to object to."

Martine Tamayo, a landscaper at a neighboring house, said he had at times seen older people in wheelchairs at the house, but that the residents were younger men who always dressed alike, in monochromatic uniforms of black or white.

Other neighbors reported seeing men dressed all in black walking up Encinitas Boulevard, which leads ; from Rancho Santa Fe to a commercial area. They frequently spotted one man in particular: a longhaired and barefoot man who often stood waiting for a bus.

"They looked different. Not mean or anything like that, just different," Tamayo said. "They never said hi,

just minded their own business."

Tamayo and other neighbors said they never saw more than a few people at the house at any one time; they were astounded at the number of bodies found. But real estate agents said the Rancho Santa Fe community—which tightly regulates architectural styles and landscaping aesthetics—does not restrict the number of people who can live in a home.

The deaths jarred neighbors in Rancho Santa Fe-known more for its polo ponies than for its cults

or criminals.

1992 Mystery

The last time their neighborhood received such notoriety was back in 1992, when a mysterious English businessman named Ian Spiro apparently shot his wife and three children to death in their home and then committed suicide by swallowing cyanide in a remote desert spot.

The Spiro case bedeviled residents because, even though police concluded that Spiro killed his family and committed suicide, conspiracy theories about the deaths abounded. Spiro's background as an

Contributing to The Times coverage of the deaths in Rancho Santa Fe were staff writers Alan Abrahamson, Nick Anderson, Tina Daunt, John Glionna, Larry Gordon, Anne-Marie O'Connor, David Reyes, Tim Rutten, Stephanie Simon, Hector Tobar, Jodi Wilgoren, researcher Nona Yates and correspondent Paul Levikow.

intelligence operative on the fringes of Middle East espionage sparked many theories about assassins and terrorists targeting the entire family.

Investigators released few details Wednesday about the group reportedly involved in the mass suicide.

They would not speculate about any possible connection between the group in Rancho Santa Fe and the recent spate of murder-suicides among followers of the Order of the Solar Temple, a cult based in Switzerland but with branches in Europe and Canada.

Just this week, five followers of the Order of the Solar Temple died when fire engulfed a house they were occupying about 40 miles southwest of Quebec City in Canada. Over the past three years, 74 members of the cult have died in murder-suicides.

Perhaps the most dramatic cult suicide in recent memory occurred in 1978, when 913 followers of the Rev. Jim Jones died in Jonestown, Guyana. Most had committed suicide, apparently by drinking grape punch laced with potassium cyanide. As with the Solar Temple cult, some of the Jonestown deaths were not

suicides but murders.

San Diego County Sheriff Bill Kolender and Undersheriff Jack Drown were in Sacramento when word of the tragedy in Rancho Santa Fe reached them. They were flying back to San Diego as the investigation continued into the night Wednesday.

About 10:30 p.m., half a dozen sheriff's deputies escorted a blond man in his mid-20s into the house to help identify the bodies. "They are the nicest, sweetest guys you ever met," said the young man, who was not identified.

A Wealthy Enclave

A look at Rancho Santa Fe, an unincorporated section of San Diego County that is one of the most exculsive places in Southern California:

Profile of Rancho Santa Fe

In this secluded community, gated million-dollar estates are tucked away behind green foliage on one- to four-acre lots. The swank area is sprinkled with polo fields and country clubs.

- **Population:** 12,180
- Average household income: \$163,228
- Average household size: 2.8
- Households: 4,280
- Housing units: 4,641

Note: 1996 estimates

ETHNIC BREAKDOWN

White	83%
Hispanic	12%
Asian	5%

AGE BREAKDOWN

34 and under	10%
35-44 gradule	26%
45-54	28%
55 and over:	37%

Note: Does not add up to 100% due to rounding

Source: Claritas Inc., based on 1990 census and 1996 estimates

HOW IT COMPARES

"I'm unaware of any place like it anywhere in America. Every once in a while I can hear a neighbor."

> —San Diego Padres owner John Moores, a Rancho Santa Fe resident

> > Square feet

Average House Size

	- 1
Rancho Santa	Fe 4,338
Bel-Air	3,491
Beverly Hills	3,409
Indian Wells	3,345
Calabasas	3,019
Source: Axiom/DataOui	rk

Largest Number of Expensive Homes

Death scene

LA GRANAD

Rancho Santa Fe

SAN DIEGO

COUNTY

	Million-dollar homes
Beverly Hills	1,474
Newport Beach	1,019
Brentwood	913
Rancho Santa Fe	793
Malibu	732

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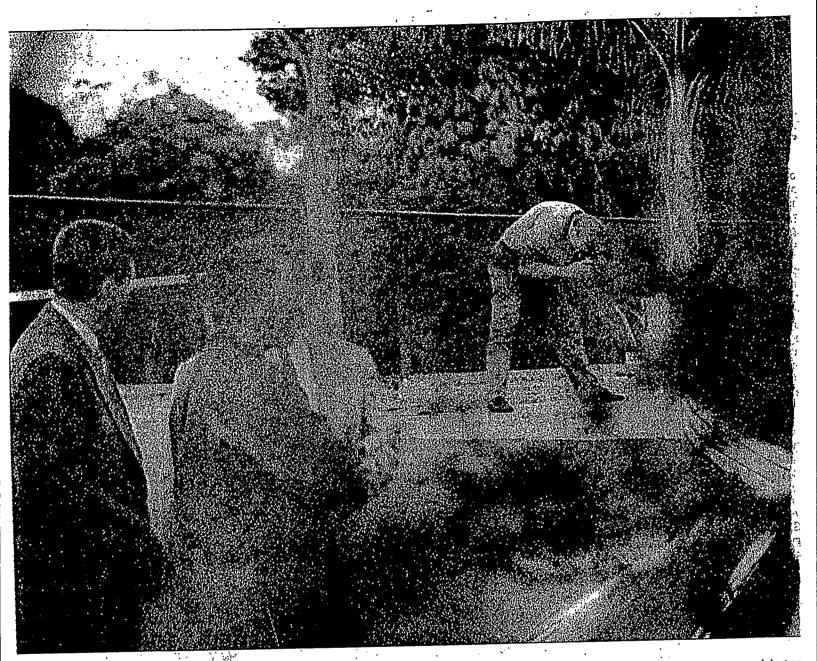
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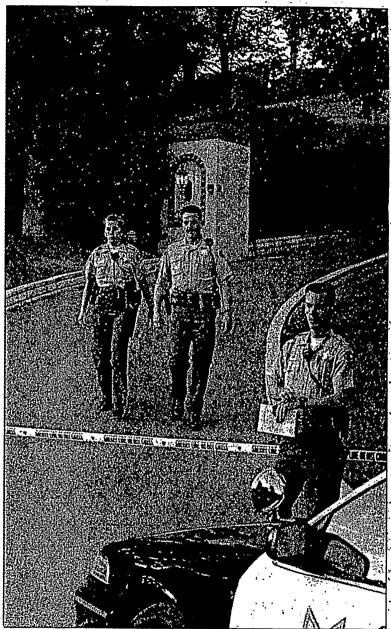
Home Sales Over \$1 Million

	In 1995
Beverly Hills	130
Rancho Santa Fe	88
Newport Beach	59
Brentwood	54
Pacific Palisades	52

Los Angeles Times



A San Diego sheriff's investigator, left, photographs back patio of house where bodies were found. Officials secured the area after receiving ar anonymous tip about a possible mass suicide inside the sprawling home.



Photos by DENIS POROY / Associated Press

Usually, 'The Ranch Is Serene Retreat

Wealth and luxury blend comfortably into the casual, picturesque setting

By Dwight Daniels

RANCHO SANTA FE — People who live here call it simply The Ranch.

And with its rolling hills, signature eucalyptus trees, and gated estates — many with neatly fenced pastures to accommodate horses — the name is apt.

An unincorporated area formed under a "covenant" nearly 70 years ago, Rancho Santa Fe is the oldest planned community in California, by far the wealthiest community in San Diego County and one of the wealthiest in the United States.

The minimum size of a lot in the town is 2.86 acres. It has the highest median income in San Diego County, \$93,000 a year, and also the highest median household wealth, \$212,000, according to marketing statistics. The median home price tops \$1.4 million.

"We've got people here who had very active roles in their professions, people of great accomplishment," said recently re-elected Rancho Santa Fe Association President Mel Sawelson in an interview last night. Some are recently made fortunes; others have been around forever.

"But we believe in being understated," he was quick to add. "People who come here want their privacy, and none of us really cares that much what anybody did in the past. We just want to enjoy each other for who we are now."

The famous popping in and out doesn't cause a ruckus. Residents give a wave or a nod to the likes of actors Martin Milner and Victor Mature or sportscaster Dick Enberg when they see them around town.

The late Ray Kroc, the founder of McDonald's, and his wife Joan have been well-known Rancho Santa Fe

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residents. Legendary NFL Community ner Pete Rozelle lived there until his death in December.

Astronaut Walter Schirra, real estate developer Ralph DeMarco, film and television writer William Simon, actors Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford and Robert Young, and author Joseph Wambaugh are among others who have called The Ranch home. Pop singer Jewel recently bought an estate here.

Padres owner John Moores bought his home here about 10 years ago, and he calls the community "abso-

lutely enchanting.

"People are just people here," he said of the neighborly, small town feel of the place. "It's not like Rodeo Drive. A lot of people are like me... they've gotten to a point where they could afford to live anywhere, and they've concluded this is best place on the universe to be".

Events such as the mass deaths discovered yesterday "are as far from indicative of our community as you can get," said Sawelson, who spent 40 years as an executive in motion pictures and felevision.

"Around here, hopefully the most serious thing that

happens is that somebody trips on the sidewalk."

There are some 5,000 residents of the covenant area, a tract of 6,200 acres. The area was mapped out in the original 1928 covenant agreement, which was designed to preserve the rural character and natural landscape of the community.

The swank enclave's downtown, known as the Village, has a lone gas station that charges among the highest prices for a gallon of fuel in the state. Many of the original building's are in the Mexican adobe style of Lillian Rice, the architect who implemented the master plan for the community in the 1920s.

"And some of our eucalyptus trees date back to the

'20s when Santa Fe rated planned this area as a community, bringing in members of their company to live here," Sawelson said.

"They planted all those trees and hoped to use the wood for railroad ties, but it didn't work out at all."

The association pays for its own security force, officers who patrol the area and can make citizens arrests or call in the Sheriff's Department.

Anyone who closes escrow on a covenant property agrees to abide by the association art jury's decision on any improvements. Disputes have erupted over everything from flower beds to sculptures.

"It took years to get people to even put numbers of their addresses out in front of their homes," said Jo—San Arnold, a public information officer for the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District. "That's how the privacy has been kept all these years. With the distance and topography, it's not so uncommon for a neighbor not to see his neighbor for a month or so."

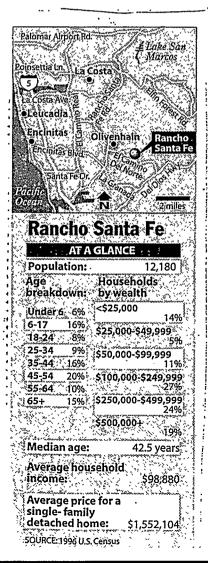
The lifestyle is Californian to the T — literally, with half a dozen country clubs within a few miles of one another. Crooner Bing Crosby's early tournaments, before WWII, were held at the Rancho Santa Fe course. Other country clubs are located nearby at Fairbanks

Ranch and Del Mar.

Many people here don't commute to offices, but simply work from their homes as investors, entrepreneurs, consultants, or writers, residents say. "The lifestyle of Rancho Santa Fe is unique, said Bebo Mallory, a longtime Realtor in the community, It's sort of like going back in time, to what life was like before there were a lot of problems."

Staff Writer Greg Moran contributed to this report.

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MOUNT CLIPPING IN SPACE BELOW

upscale village in a state of shock

Neighbors face dread, dismay in wake of the horrid tragedy

By Patricia Dibsie and Jeanne F. Brooks STAFF WRITERS

RANCHO SANTA FE — Residents of this quiet, gold-plated village grew progressively more agitated as a mixture of news accounts and rumors of a mass suicide filtered through their community yesterday.

In the parking lot of a neighborhood market, in the bars of restaurants along Paseo Delicias and on the eucalyptus-lined streets wherever residents met, they asked: Have you heard?

"Things like that don't happen here," offered a middle-aged man who hurried along a village road, late for a seminar on finances. His face took on a look of relief when he was told that the victims were renters.

"Oh, then they're not really people from the ranch; real people from the ranch don't commit suicidé," he added, scoffing attearlier rumors of 10 bodies.

"He said "that's small potatoes compared to Guyana," where more than 900 members of the California-based People's Temple drank a cyanide-laced fruit drink in 1978.

Few were able to talk about anything else.

Keith Arendsee, a financial consultant with an area brokerage firm, had been working at his office when phone calls alerted him to the tragedy.

i., "I'm shocked," he said. "Unbelievable."

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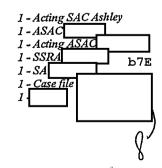
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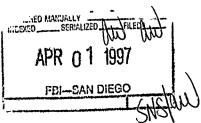
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He continued walking along the sidewalk outside his office when he bumped into Chuck Courtney, one of the area's golf pros.

"You hear, as many as 49 peo-

"Yeah, weird."

"Courtney said he knew where the house was and that he hadn't heard about anything weird going on at the place. "Jesus," he said

· No one was questioning why, just where. They couldn't believe it had happened in their community.

Customers in one bar pored over a photo copy of the house from a listing in a real estate book. The conversation started back at the beginning every time someone new joined the group.

As the death toll soared from 10 to 39, the bar became quieter.

-3-On a sidewalk outside a market. Jan Miller walked her dog and compared news with other strollers. The 25-year resident and former TV show writer shook her head as she heard the latest tally - 39 dead.

"I understand that they were renters, so they weren't really Rancho Santa Fe people," she told a clerk. The two stood talking until the tiny dog grew impatient and pulled on the leash.

· A woman who said she lived on the top of a hill near the house where the 39 died swore she had heard screams coming from the house late at night over the past couple weeks.

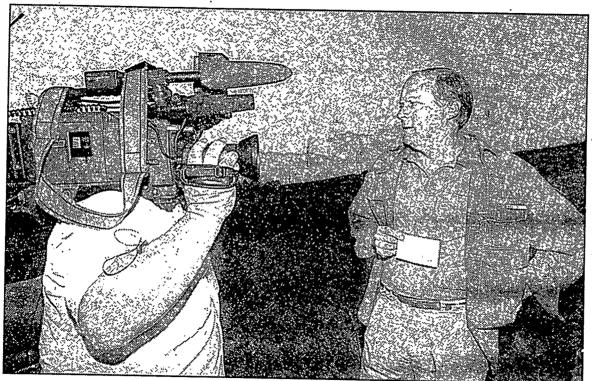
"Up on the hill, you hear things," she said, adding that she had dismissed the incidents after her husband said she always made too

much of nothing.

"I wanted to call a friend in the FBI," she said. "I would hear things in the distance and it gave me an eerie feeling. It gave me the creeps but my husband says I'm silly about things like that and so I didn't."

Mille Fleurs Restaurant manager Stephen Poskus said people were coming into the restaurant and heading straight for the TV in the bar to find out what was happening. He said nobody at the restaurant seemed to know the people at all.

"We're all shocked and more than a little surprised," he said, adding, "it's not exactly what you'd expect to have happen in a community like Rancho Santa Fe."



SEAN HAFFEY / Union-Tribune

Neighbor: Bill Strong, who lives next door to the property where 39 men were found dead yesterday afternoon, is approached by a television photographer. Strong holds a card with the name of the owner of the house where the young men were discovered.



TONY DOUBEK / Union-Tribune

Town talk: Jan Miller, speaking outside Rancho Santa Fe's Village Market, discusses the mass deaths:



Media attention: San Diego County Sheriff's Commander Alan Fulmer (center) briefed reporters last night after the discovery of the bodies of 39 young men, found lying side by side in matching dark pants and tennis shoes in a million-dollar mansion in Rancho Santa Fe.

Grisly history for doomsday cults

From Guyana to Waco standoff, a legacy of death

By Gregory Gross STAFF WRITER

The young men whose bodies filled the rooms of a Rancho Santa Fe mansion are but the latest in a series of mass suicides and slayings that have horrified the world since the late. 1970s.

Many of those grisly events have been perpetrated by so-called doomsday cults, whose devotees turn apocalyptic visions of the future into orgies of self-sacrifice — or in some cases, homicide.

The largest mass suicide associated with the United States involved the Rev. Jim Jones and the California-based People's Temple in 1978.

More than 900 Temple members drank a grape-flavored, poisoned

punch, with the fatal concoction even being given to children at the urging of Jones.

Earlier, Congressman Leo Ryan, a San Francisco Examiner photographer and a San Francisco television news cameraman were all shot to death after flying together to Guyana to investigate the cult.

More recently, 83 members of the Branch Davidians, a heavily-armed cult led by David Koresh, killed four federal agents in a fierce gunbattle at their compound in Waco, Texas, in 1993, then burned to death inside the facility when the FBI tried to force an end to their 51-day standoff.

Not all such cults devote themselves to suicide, however. Some turn to murder, authorities claim.

Police SWAT teams swooped down on Hulon Mitchell Jr., a politically influential black Florida preacher who called himself Yahweh Ben Yahweh, after he was accused in 1990 of conducting a reign of terror that included the murder of 14 opponents and the firebombing of a block of homes.

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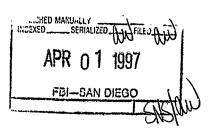
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In recent years, other doomsday cults have risen in Europe and Asia, with terrifying results.

A French-speaking cult calling itself the Order of the Solar Temple stunned the world with a series of mass suicides

in Europe and Canada.

Members of the Solar Temple believe that the group's founder had taken part in the Crusades in a previous life and that through death they would be able to join him on the star Sirius.

In October 1994, 53 members of the group committed suicide in two villages in Switzerland and at a ski resort in Quebec, Canada. Their bodies were found inside burning buildings.

Again in December 1995, the burned remains of 16 Solar Temple members were found lying in a forest clearing near the French city of Grenoble in the Alps. Their bodies had been arranged in a star formation in the snow.

As recently as last Sunday, police in Canada's Quebec province were investigating the deaths of five people found in a burned-out house owned by a member of the Solar Temple.

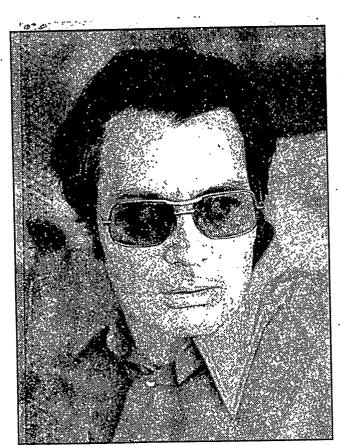
In Japan, a doomsday cult called Aum Shinri Kyo attempted not mass suicide, but mass murder, releasing Sarin nerve gas in five Tokyo subway stations on March 20, 1995.

Eleven people were killed and 5,500 sickened. The same group is suspected by Japanese authorities in a similar poison gas attack on a small Japanese town outside of Tokyo that killed seven people and injured 144.

Its blind leader, Shoko Asahara, has been arrested and charged with murder.

Closer to home, six occupants of a house in Tijuana, including four members of one family, were found shot to death in 1993. A 10-year-old boy, who hid in a closet as the killings took place, later told police how the gunmen had shouted, "You're going to hell!"

Three years later, a family of six was found stabbed to death in their home outside Mexico City. The suspects in that case reportedly believed their victims were witches, police said.



SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

Cult leader: More than 900 followers in Jonestown, Guyana, joined the Rev. Jim Jones in at ass suicide in 1978.

Spiro case rocked community in '92

By Darlene Himmelspach STAFF WRITER

RANCHO SANTA FE—Four-and-a-half years ago, this exclusive community was rocked by the grisly discovery of a mother and her three children shot to death in their luxury home—killed by the man who had loved them.

them.

Ian Stuart Spiro, millions of dollars in debt and a failure at business, took his own life four days after wiping out his family. Spiro died of cyanide poisoning. His body was found in the Anza-Borrego Desert Nov. 8, 1992.

Detectives concluded that Spiro, 46, shot his wife, Gail, 41, daughter Sara, 16, and son Adam, 12, as they slept. His youngest child, Dina, 10, was awakened by the noise and was standing and resisting when her father shot her.

Audio tapes discovered after his death contained the ramblings of a loser as Spiro talked of his vain efforts to use a Ouija board to win the lottery and solve his overwhelming financial problems.

Ian and Gail Spiro lived in a \$1 million estate, which they rented for \$5,000 a month, near the Rancho Santa Fe Golf Course. When they died, they owed at least \$5 million to creditors. In-

vestigators found "handfuls" of credit cards, all charged to their limit. Water and electricity had been shut off for nonpayment.

Spiro's 900-number business was failing and he was operating a money-juggling scheme in which money from new investors was being used to pay off old ones.

The Spiros had lived in many parts of the world and were accustomed to a grand lifestyle. Their many relocations added to the complexity of the case, a sheriff's captain said at the time.

"It's not like this guy was a plumber and lived in San Diego and went to Hoover High School," Capt. Jim Marmack

"For his entire life, he threw nine balls in the air," a source told *The San Diego Union-Tribune*. "Then the balls started falling and he couldn't do anything about it. He was desperate."

The case made international headlines and prompted wild conspiracy theories until the Sheriff's Department determined three years later that the deaths were a murder-suicide.

The most persistent theory was that the CIA, seeking to prevent release of a videotape depicting the torture and murder of

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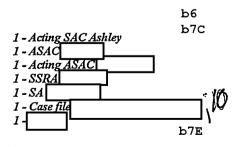
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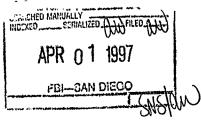
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FILE PHOTO

High-profile couple: Detectives believe Ian Spiro killed his wife, Gail, shown with him in this undated photo, and three children before committing suicide.

the agency's Beirut, Lebanon, chief, William Buckley, by Shiite Muslim extremists in 1984, murdered the family and took the tape.

No such tape was ever found. British journalists identified Spiro as a former British and American spy with ties to the Iran-Contra affair.

Other theories included Spiro

double-crossing the Israeli secret service, which then sent a hit squad to kill him, or that Spiro made off with drug money and was the target of drug kingpins.

Sheriff's detectives ruled out the theories, determining instead that Spiro murdered his wife and children and committed suicide to escape mounting debts.

Autopsies set for this morning

Results could take days or even weeks

By Rex Dalton STAFF WRITER

Autopsies on bodies found yesterday in a Rancho Santa Fe home; will begin this morning at the county Medical Examiner's Office, where officials spent the night preparing for the onerous job of determining causes of death.

The bodies will be stored in a 40-foot trailer at about 38 degrees until county pathologists can feel form autopsies, officials said! At least 39 bodies were discovered in the house.

Officials from the Los Angeles County Coroner's Office, who called yesterday to assist San Diego authorities, sent two rescue vans last night to help transport the bodies to the Kearny Mesa office of the medical examiner. The refrigeration ed vans can carry up to 20 bodies, officials said.

Depending on what evidence is available at the house where the bodies were found, the medical examiner will begin running toxicology screens and performing other tests to determine what caused the deaths, said Calvin L. Vine, a supervising investigator.

It could be days or weeks before the exact cause of death is knowl, if an unusual toxin was involved, he added.

Dr. Brian D. Blackbourne, the county medical examiner, and and other pathologist were some of the first authorities at the house, examining the bodies and checking for evidence. Blackbourne was unavailable for comment last night.

Pathologists are not expected to work around the clock performing autopsies, officials said, because there is only so much evidence that can be obtained from a decomposing body.

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But because it will take several days to lower the temperature of the bodies to halt decomposition; the staff at the Medical Examiner's Office can be expected to work with dispatch to complete the autopsies.

The initial autopsies will be the most important, because they will provide basic information about the cause of death, Vine said.

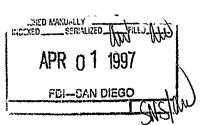
In past cases of mass deaths, the Medical Examiner's Office has learned that it is best to designate a couple of pathologists to handle routine deaths in the county, while several of the agency's remaining seven pathologists concentrate on bodies from the major incident?

One or two officials also will be designated to talk with families as identifications of the bodies are made.

As of about 8 p.m. yesterday, no families had called the medical examiner about any missing relatives, officials said.

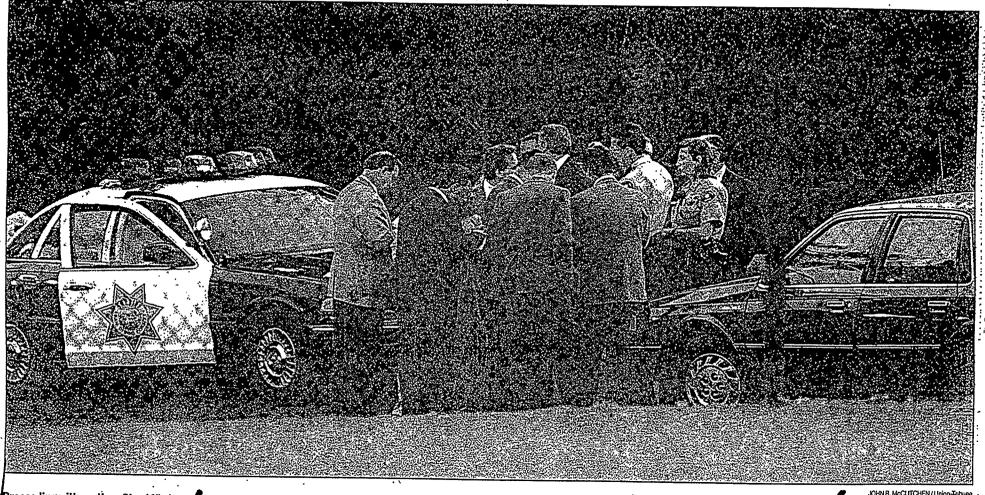
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HORROR IN RANCHO SANTA FE



CHNR.McCUTCHEN/Union-Tubus

Proceeding with caution: Sheriff's investigators waited outside the Rancho Santa Fe home for hours yesterday until a search warrant was issued and until members of the county's Hazardous

Materials Team could check the house for toxic chemicals.



Investigation begins: A county sheriff's investigator shines a light at a window of the Rancho Santa Fe house where the bodies of at least 39 young men were found yesterday. Authorities went to the house in response to an anonymous caller's tip.

"I've never seen anything like this in my life."

IT. JERRY LIPSCOMB, homicide detective

Wansion of death yields 39 bodies



Religious group, all men, discovered dead in Rancho Santa Fe

■ Deaths appear to be a mass suicide, according to sheriff's deputies

By Ruth L. McKinnie STAFF WRITER

RANCHO SANTA FE — At least 39 members of a religious group, all men who referred to themselves as angels, were found dead yesterday inside a rented million-dollar-plus

Sheriff's investigators, who began searching the house only late last night, said the deaths appeared to be a mass suicide. If so, it would be one of the largest such incidents in U.S. history

The men, mostly between the ages of 18 and 24, had been dead at least three days, authorities said.

The bodies were found by a sheriff's deputy sent to the house just after 4 p.m., yesterday in response to an anonymous caller's tip to check.

on the welfare of the people inside the secluded house on Colina Norte. A similar call was received by Beverly Hills police and routed to San Diego sheriff's officers.

The first deputy to enter the home found several bodies and stopped counting at 10. He left the house and waited until another deputy arrived. Together they counted 39 bodies.

The dead were scattered throughout the rambling two-story house, sheriff's officials said. Some were on their backs on the floor with their hands at their sides, while others were lying on cots or mattresses. Sources said all but two had their heads and shoulders draped with purple, silky

scarves, with one corner on the forehead and two corners on the shoulders.

inside

Rancho Santa Fe residents grew

> mass suicide litered through heir community

- The Ranch: A profile of Ranch
- Determining the cause of a death: Autopsies on hodies will

n the county Medical Examiner Office A-4

History: A look mass suicides nd slayings that ave norrified the yorld since the late 970s:/A-5 Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

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There were no survivors.

"They were all in a prone position on their back with their arms at their sides," said sheriff's Cmdr. Alan Fulmer. "All appeared as if they'd fallen asleep."

All the dead were wearing dark trousers, sneakers and light-colored shirts. There were no obvious signs of injury on any of the bodies, and there was no sign of a struggle inside the house, he said.

See HORROR ON PAGE A-5

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IFBI—SAN DIEGO



Veteran officers call it the worst they've seen

Continued from A-1

"This is the worst (crime scene) in terms of the numbers of people in one place at one time that I've ever seen," Fulmer said.

"I've never seen anything like this in my life," said veteran homi-cide Detective Lt. Jerry Lipscomb.

There were many computers inside the house. One computer monitor was on with a note indicating that it should not be turned off.

"I'll bet that's their suicide note," a law enforcement source said.

An attorney for the businessman

who owns the home said it had been rented in October to a religious group he knew by the name of WW Higher Source. Others said the men designed pages for the World Wide Web.

Realtors said the home's owner. Sam Koutchesfahani, rented it for \$10,000 a month after unsuccessfully trying to sell it for \$1.595

The renters "referred to them-selves as angels," said Milton Sil-verman, Koutchesfahani's attor-

ney, "They didn't drink, they didn't smoke, (they) were celibate..., "They believed they were sent to farth, as angels," he added. "They met in Middle America, U.S.A." Silveyman said there are affiliates or chapters of their group in New Mission and Arizons. Mexico and Arizona.

The house remained on the mar-

ket, Silverman said, though the group asked not to be bothered by prospective buyers this week.

hey requested that the house "Lifey requested that the nouse not be shown this week because it was their holy week," Silverman said. "They appeared to be peaceful. religious people."

Holy Week, the last week of Jesus, life, started Sunday with Palm Sunday, Purple — the color of the scarres found on the corpess— is

scarves found on the corpses one of traditional colors associated with the Lenten season.

Sheriff Bill Kolender, Undersheriff Jack Drown and Gov. Pete Wilson were said to be on their way to the mansion from out of town last night, while as many as 20 sheriff's detectives waited outside the home for hours until a search warrant

was issued.
Investigators also waited until members of the county's Hazardous Materials Team made sure no toxic chemicals were inside the

house.

The first two deputies to enter the!:house wearing surgical masks — smelled a noxious, pungent odor inside. The house was completely shut up, with all the windows and doors closed, although the deputies found an unlocked side door through which they entered.

The two deputies were examined at a hospital as a precaution and

were discharged.

Last night, a sheriff's evidence technician in the rear of the home was seen taking numerous photographs of apparent writing on a sidewalk.

As sheriff's officials began their investigation, seven helicopters and one, small plane, all possibly hired by the media, flew low over the house. El Camino del Norte, the nearby main thoroughfare, was congested with interested passers-

by.
Bill Strong, a Realtor who lives next door to the home where the bodies were found, said the last time he saw anyone go in or out of

the house was on Saturday.

Strong said he occasionally saw people coming and going from the home in four large vans with New Mexico license plates. He said he

exchanged waves with them, but never words.

"It almost seemed like they were a nonspeaking order," Strong said. I never heard a noise from there.'

Strong said he once saw a chalkboard inside the house and used binoculars to try to read what was written on it. He said he saw a list with five columns with three letters written under each column, but he

could not decipher the meaning.

Four or five members of the group apparently did computer work for Web Sites Now, which is owned by Interact Entertainment Group in Beverly Hills, according to Lili Ungar, a Santa Monica publicist whose clients include Interact.

One of those members left the group about three months ago and is now employed by the company, she said last night.

Ungar spoke with Nick Matzorkis, Interact's owner, after learning of the deaths. "He didn't believe they were part of a cult or anything like that - they were just people,

Ungar said.

One cult expert said that yesterday's grim discovery was reminis-cent of the ritual deaths of followers of the Order of the Solar Temple, a Swiss-based cult, who apparently believed that by killing themselves they would be transported to a new

life in a world called Sirius.

"The M.O. is similar," said the
Rev. Peter Barnes, who became a student of cults and a Baptist minister after leaving a cult.

The fact that the bodies were positioned somewhat alike — many. lying on their backs — was among the similarities. The bodies found in two 1994 mass suicides, which claimed a total of 53 lives, were found in circles. In a mass suicide ritual within the same cult the next year, the 16 bodies were arranged in a star formation.

The Solar Temple deaths may also have been linked to the position of the sun.

But another expert played down

att another expert played down the possible links.

"There's nothing at this point that appears linked to the Solar Temple," Mike Kropveld, executive director of Info-Cult, a Montreal organization, told The New York Times. Kropveld said all known Solar Temple members have been accounted for and authorities did not know of any large group of them that was missing.

The 9,200-square-foot house with seven bedrooms and 7½ baths is one of five or six expensive homes on the cul-de-sac. The home sits on a three-acre lot with a swimming pool, spa and tennis courts.

Koutchesfahani, the owner, re-

cently pleaded guilty to tax evasion and fraud. He admitted that he took as much as \$350,000 from Middle Eastern students between 1989 and 1995 and used the money to bribe instructors at San Diego City College, Mesa College and Palomar College to illegally enroll the stu-dents and certify them as California

Neighbors Arnie and Claudia Kapan, who moved into their house on Colina Norte in October, said Koutchesfahani joked about renting

his home to monks.

Koutchesfahani "was a real nice guy," said Arnie Kapan, 72. "He said, 'You are one of the nicest neighbors around.' He said to me

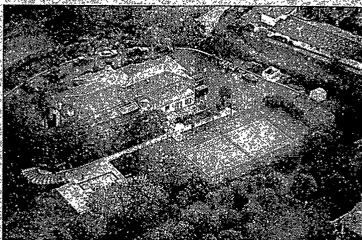
neignbors around. He said to me jokingly, 'I am going to rent my house to some monks.'"

"We think we are in paradise," said Claudia Kapan, 65. "We left L.A. because it was getting gnarty in there. We thought we ware up there.... We thought we were moving to a safe utopia. The only exciting thing around here is the ditch they are digging out front to put in a pipe."

Most homes in the area are behind security gates. Several residents declined to speak to report-

The house at a glance

The home on Colina Norte where the deaths occurred was for sale, listed at \$1,595,000.



From a current real estate listing: This two-story home built in 1983 has 7 bedrooms, 7.5 bathrooms and is approximately 9,200 sq. ft. Rooms include an indoor laundry room, guest house. Other features include fireplaces living room, hardwood floors. This home has a four or more car garage, and patio. Recreation amenities include swimming pool, spa, tennis court. The 3.11-acre lot is located on a cul-de-sac:

Dimensions:

*

Master Bedroom 37x22 2nd bedroom 17x12 3rd bedroom 17x12 4th bedroom 17x12 5th bedroom 16x12 Living room 30x28 Dining room 18x14 Family room 26x15 Kitchen 26x14 Extra room 26x14

Additional features:

Forced air heat
Electric heating
Baseboard heat
Propage heating
TV cable available
Security features
Attached parking
Landscape Irrigation
Lot size between 2 1/2 and 5 acres
Frame and stucco exterior

SOURCE: SignOn San Diego

UNION-TRIBUNE

ers last night, while others expressed alarm.
"I am very shocked something

"I am very shocked something like this would happen on our quiet street," said Jody Honnen, 63, who lives next to the home where the bodies were found. "Everyone is very respectable. Everyone stays to themselves. And everyone is very nice."

Staff writers L. Erik Bratt, Clark Brooks, Sandi Dolbee, J. Harry Jones, Anthony Millican, Jim Okerblom and Kelly Thornton contributed to this report.



Grisly discovery: Law enforcement investigators gathered yesterday outside the home on Colina Norte in Rancho Santa Fe where the bodies of 39 young men, all reportedly members of a religious group, were found. The dead were scattered throughout the rambling two-story house, officials said. Authorities said they believed the men had been dead at least three days.



Mansion of death: San Diego County sheriff's deputies duck under police tape as they enter the million-dollar Rancho Santa Fe estate where the bodies of at least 39 young men in matching dark pants and tennis shoes were found. The men, all white, ranged from 18 to 24 years of age.

Community's Tranquillity Shattered

■ Neighborhoods:

Exclusive gated area where deaths occurred has been quiet haven for the wealthy since 1920s.

By GREG KRIKORIAN and JODI WILGOREN TIMES STAFF WRITERS

ANCHO SANTA FE—It was planned as a place of light and graceful ease, but for at least 39 members of an obscure, computer-oriented group called W.W. Higher Source, this gated community in the rolling hills of northern San Diego County somehow became the site of a cybernetic dark night of the soul.

"It was rented out to some monks or lamas," Carol Kappan said of the house on Rancho Santa Fe's Colina Norte, where the apparent mass suicide occurred. "I never saw them. [Sam Koutchesfahani, the owner] said he was going to rent it to some monks, which he did.

"It is a religious sect of some kind. I haven't seen them. They were very low key," said Kappan, who lives in one of the street's four other houses.

About 30 miles north of San Diego, Rancho Santa Fe, which was laid out in 1927, is the oldest planned community in California and has been declared a historic landmark.

Its name derives from the tract's original owner, the Santa Fe railroad, which used the land to grow eucalyptus trees for railroad ties. As the era of railway expansion rumbled to a halt in the 1920s, the company developed its land as a haven for wealthy seekers of sunshine and quiet with a taste for golf, polo and the pleasures of the nearby Del Mar race course.

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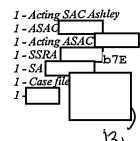
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And so it has remained With a population of slightly more than 12,000 living in homes priced from \$1 million to about \$3 million, Rancho Santa Fe has a median personal income of about \$60,500. Current residents include 1950s singer Patti Page, diet guru Jenny Craig and retired actor Victor Mature.

There is no home mail delivery, because most of the lots are so big.

There are no street lights, and deed restrictions allow only two styles of houses—Spanish Mediterranean and ranch. Most, like the scene of the apparent mass suicide, are Spanish Mediterranean.

Perhaps the only gothic aspect to the community's normally sunburnished life is the longtime residents' habit of referring to both the local homeowners' association and its regulations as "the covenant."

"It's a very close-knit commu-

nity, but also very private," said Walt Ekard, who recently completed nine years as Rancho Santa Fe's town manager. "If you don't know your neighbors, it's not unusual. One of the reasons people move here is that they don't want to be flashy. They want to live in peace."

he sprawling 9,200-squarefoot mansion at 18241 Colina Norte, where the bodies of W.W. Higher Source's presumed members were discovered Wednesday, is typical of the area.

Set on several acres, it is at least 100 yards from its nearest neighbor. The winding cul-de-sac is overhung by mature trees. The two-story, palm-hedged house with a red-tile roof is set up from the street behind flowering hibiscus and bougainvillea and a border of meticulously sculpted shrubbery. Its amenities include a swimming pool, tennis court, putting green and elevator.

As darkness fell Wednesday, the lighted pool glinted amid an expanse of tile decking. Nearby, an oblong wooden dining table stood bare, surrounded by six empty chairs.

According to Holly Manion, a longtime local Realtor and resident, 18241 Colina Norte is in the

original section of Rancho Sal Fe, on a high point in the unincorporated part of San Diego County. "The views are fabulous. It is one the highest points in the covenant. The views stretch out all the way to the ocean."

Manion said she has shown the house, which is currently up for sale, in the past, but "I doubt I can show it tomorrow," she added.

"It is a very, very nice house, with high ceilings, a wonderful spacious master suite and wonderful landscaping," Manion said. In fact, the first law enforcement officers on the scene Wednesday looked into the rambling, cream-colored house and reported finding a full pantry, expensive furniture and decorations in a "Southwestern" motif.

Three vans and a truck were parked in the arching drive; the shades on the expansive windows and french doors were drawn. All but a single side door were secured.

Koutchesfahani reportedly told another neighbor, who asked to remain anonymous "that he rented it to members of a cult, and that they were paying him in cash, because they didn't want to pay taxes."

The neighbor visited the house once, to retrieve her dog, who had wandered away. She said she saw

several white men in their 20s and 30s.

"They were all clean-shaven. They were all dressed California casual," she said. "If you saw them on the street, you wouldn't think anything except for their hair, which was close-cropped and looked like amateurs had cut it, except they all had the same hair-cut."

"If they were noisy, we wouldn't have heard it—there's enough of a separation between the houses," she added.

She and the other neighbors, however, did hear the hordes of law enforcement officers, journalists and gawkers who jammed Colina Norte in the hours after dusk.

"This is chaos," said 16-year-old Drummond Doroski, whose family lives on the cul-de-sac. "We've got cars lined all up and down this street."

As the darkness deepened, the scene of the tragedy took on the surreal air of spot-lit stage back-drop.

ne of the neighbors held an impromptu news conference while eating food from a tray bearing butter pecan ice cream, ginger snaps and a cup of instant coffee. Scores of reporters, from local television and radio

stations, as well as such network and syndicated television shows as "48 Hours" and "Inside Edition" hovered around one resident's house, where San Diego sheriff's deputies held an official press conference. At point, as ABC "Nightline" prepared to broadcast live from the scene, crew members asked Arnie Kappan, owner of an Oceanside glassware company, if they could park their truck on his property?

."As long as it isn't dripping oil," he replied.

"We used to the live in Pacific Palisades," said Carol Kappan, "and we used to have all the helicopters of O.J. We thought we were moving to paradise and nothing ever happened here," she mused as the media circus pitched its tents outside her family's home.

As for the dead young men inside the nearby house, they apparently lived and died behind the visible and invisible walls of privacy that surround Rancho Santa Fe. They were, in the end, much further than 200 yards from any of their neighbor.

"These houses are very private,"
Miriam Larios, a maid for the
Kappan family, said in Spanish.
"Nobody knows anybody."



39 dead in mass suicide

Religious group had rented Calif. mansion

By Jonathan T. Lovitt USA TODAY

RANCHO SANTA FE, Calif.

— Police acting on a telephone tip of a mass suicide discovered the bodies of 39 young men in a million-dollar mansion here Wednesday.

Officials said the bodies, all white and ages 18-24, bore no signs of trauma. All were dressed in dark pants and tennis shoes. They were found on their backs with their hands at the side, said San Diego County Sheriff's Cmdr. Alan Fulmer.

Investigators found bodies on beds, cots and mattresses in various rooms of the home.

There were no suicide notes found or any indication of a motive. Fulmer said.

He said deputies wearing surgical masks "encountered a noxious, pungent odor," and two were sent to the hospital for blood tests.

A hazardous materials crew was on the scene.

At 11:30 p.m. (1:30 a.m. ET) the bodies remained in the house. Officials were still awaiting a search warrant.

Investigators believe it was a mass suicide due to the number of people involved, and no signs of struggle or trauma.

The home had been rented by a religious group, though the name was unavailable.

Real estate broker Scott Warren, who toured the home with prospective buyers, told ABC's Nightline the occupants "were pretty bizarre."

Warren and his party were instructed to put on slippers "because they considered the house a temple."

Several rooms contained computers where members told Warren they were developing World Wide Web pages.

Tara Buckly, 25, who trains horses for one of the neighbors, said she rode near the house every day, and "I've never seen them."

Rancho Santa Fe, an exclusive community in northern San Diego County, is home to many wealthy residents, including John Moores, a computer software magnate who owns the San Diego Padres.

Former NFL commissioner Pete Rozelle lived there until his death in December.

"It sounds pretty damn bizarre," said Moores. "The reason we bought there is it's very, very peaceful."

While no cult connection had surfaced, the incident comes after a suicide in a remote farmhouse outside Saint Casimir, Quebec, last weekend.

Five members of a notorious doomsday cult died in a blazing house Saturday in an apparent ritual suicide pact.

The five were linked to the Order of the Solar Temple, a sect responsible for the deaths of 74 people in collective suicide pacts in Switzerland, France and Quebec since 1994.

➤ Cult speculation, 3A

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

1 ·A USA Today Arlington, VA

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Title:

"39 dead in mass suicide -Religious group had rented Calif. mansion"

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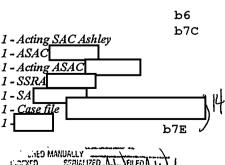
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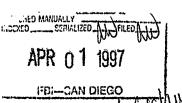
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Experts warn against assumptions about cults

By Jason Sandford and John Bacon USA TODAY

While reports speculated that the 39 young men found dead in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif., were members of a cult, experts cautioned Wednesday night against rushing to judge members of cult-like groups.

"It's important to understand their reality system," said Mike Kropveld of Info-Cult, a Montreal group that studies cults. "It doesn't make it acceptable to anyone else, but it makes it more understandable."

Authorities have not said the

men who died in the San Diego County mansion were members of a cult. But several people said a religious group had met in the house.

The deaths of cult members Saturday in Canada led some to ask whether the deaths Wednesday in California were related.

Five members of the Order of the Solar Temple died after rigging propane tanks to set their house on fire in St. Casimir, Quebec. During the past three years, mass suicides by Solar Temple followers have resulted in 74 deaths in Europe and Canada.

J. Gordon Melton, director

of the Institute for the Study of American Religion in Santa Barbara, Calif., said Solar Temple members usually use poison, sedatives and fire.

Melton said that so far, he doesn't believe the deaths Wednesday are related to the Solar Temple group.

"I haven't heard anything about fire yet, which makes me hesitate to say it was this group," Melton said.

A number of people who were not invited to attend the first Solar Temple suicide in Switzerland were "very angry," Melton said. Fifty-three died there. A year later a smaller group in Switzerland

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left a note that members were going to join the others in the afterworld.

Not all cult-like groups adhere to doomsday beliefs, Info-Cult's Kropveld said.

"A cult is basically a way of understanding how a structure works. It doesn't have to be religious," he said. Kropveld called cult mental-

Kropveld called cult mentality "magical thinking, the belief that when things get tough, there's some secret formula out there for instant nirvana."

"In their perspective, they do not commit suicide, but decide to depart and go into another plane of existence,"

Ronald Enroth, a sociolog

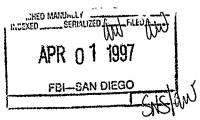
professor at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, Calif., said the victims' ages and the setting fit the profile of modern cult activity.

"That age bracket is precisely the target population for cults," Enroth said.

"And if it was in an upscale neighborhood, the new groups have been targeting the upper middle class."

Before 1950, cults like the Father Divine movement and the Sweet Daddy Grace movement targeted disenfranchised Americans, Enroth said. Religious groups have been recruiting more affluent members in recent years, he said.

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Owner of home is not a stranger to being in news

EVAN DREYER
NORTH COUNTY TIMES

RANCHO SANTA FE — The owner of the Rancho Santa Fe estate where the largest mass suicide in U.S. history occurred is no stranger to headlines.

is no stranger to headlines.

Sam Koutchesfahani, 43, pleaded guilty to federal conspiracy and tax-evasion charges in February 1996. He is awaiting sentencing, and faces up to five years in prison, a maximum fine of \$250,000 and three years of supervised release on each of the charges.

The charges stemmed from bribing instructors and administrators at three community colleges, including Palomar College in San Marcos, to illegally enroll students, certify them as California residents, falsify their grades and issue counterfeit education certificates and diplomas.

The guilty plea came as part of a widespread fraud investigation begun in 1995 after administrators at San Diego City College noticed problems with the immigration status of some foreign students at the schools.

In all, Koutchesfahani and three others have admitted some guilt in the case. One of those admissions came two months ago when Michael King, a 23-year Palomar College employee, pleaded guilty to felony tax-evasion charges. King, placed on administrative leave by the college, acknowledged during an inter-

> OWNER, A2

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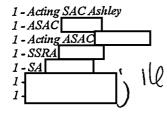
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> OWNER

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view with the North County Times last month that he had business ties to Koutchesfahani. He said he exchanged money with Koutchesfahani over a deal they had to import estrich products from South Africa.

Also pleading guilty were former San Diego City College professor Miguel Menchaca and City College administrator

Richard Maldonado.

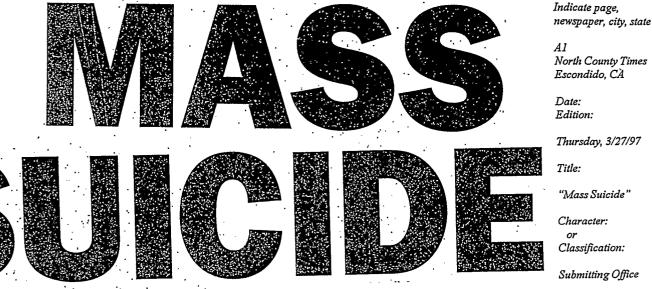
Prosecutors said in court documents that Koutchesfahani ran a business called Tan Trading and Consulting Group, which was established for the sole purpose of bribing officials to get students from the Middle East into various community colleges in San Diego.

He reportedly received \$200,000 to \$350,000 in bribes

between 1989 and 1995.

7

"There's never been something like that in San Diego, in terms of the level of sophistication and intricacy in corrupting institutions and violating immigrations laws," a spokeswoman with the U.S. Attorney's Office said last year. Neither Koutchesfahani nor his lawyer, Milt Silverman, could be reached for comment Wednesday.



Deputies find 39 men dead San Diego Indexing: at palatial Rancho Santa Fe estate

This story was reported by North County Times staff writers Timothy O'Hara, Craig Miller, D. Wade Booth, Tahlia M. Marlin, Karen S. Smith, Holly Lobelson, Randy Dotinga, Jennifer Levitz-Peck, Phil Diehl, Don Stanziano, Hweilee Khoe, Claire Vitucci and Craig Sturak. It was written by Craig Miller.

the largest mass suicide on U.S. Who they are, what they are, we soil, the bodies of 39 identically don't know at this point. The apclad young men were found by pearances are that it's suicide. sheriff's deputies Wednesday af We're going to check out all posternoon in a palatial Ranche sibilities." Santa Fe home.

The men, who apparently belonged to a religious group of

More coverage inside. Pages A2, A3.

computer programmers, had been dead for several days, authorities said.

The grisly scene, which drew nationwide media attention, came just days after five members of a death cult fatally burned themselves in Quebec, Canada. Sheriff's homicide officials said they do not yet know whether the two incidents are related. A representative of the homeowner said the men belong to a different cult.

It's early in the investigation," said sheriff's Cmdr. Alan Fulmer. "We'll be here all night. RANCHO SANTA FE — In We've got a lot of work to do.

Around 3:15 p.m., sheriff's officials received an anonymous call to check the welfare of people at 18241 Colina Norte, a culde-sac off El Camino Del Norte, Fulmer said. Shortly thereafter, Beverly Hills police called with more information. They had received a call from a former group member who was worried about his friends and fearful the group members might be planning to kill themselves. He apparently had received a letter from someone in the Rancho Santa Fe house saying that it would be the last he would receive.

Deputy Robert Brunk responded and found the home's front doors locked, windows shut

> SUICIDE, A2

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Strong, who has lived next to the Colina Norte house for 10 years, said several men had been renting the house since late October. They would come and go in white vans, and there was often a large Ryder moving van on the property near the tennis court.

Strong's son, Will, 16, said, "They seemed really anti-social. One time my dad tried to say 'hi' to them as they left, and they just didn't even look at him. They just looked away."

A few times, the Strongs saw, a couple of teen age girls playing in the driveway and several older white males on the property. They always dressed casually, mostly in jeans and T-shirts. Another time, Bill Strong saw several of the men in a pancake house and said they were cordial.

"You knew these weren't the kind of people who had 9-to-5 jobs," Strong said. "They would come and go at all hours; there was no regular routine."

A young man who approached deputies late Wednesday night said he knew the group of men living in the house.

He said they belonged to a religious group, calling them "the sweetest, nicest guys in the world. What they're saying about them in the media just isn't true."

In an interview with KFMB radio, Milt Silverman, an attorney who represents the home's owner, identified the men as members of a group called WW Higher Source. He said they ranged in age from 16 to 65, didn't drink or smoke and were celibate. The men believe

Strong, who has lived next to the lina Norte house for 10 years, and this was their holy week, Sildseveral men had been renting verman said.

Apparently the men are part of a group of computer programmers whose company, Higher Source, designed "pages" on the World Wide Web for clients.

The company's clients, according to its own web site, included the Rancho Santa Fe-based San Diego Polo Club. Little of the web site was accessible on Wednesday night, apparently because many computer users were trying to look at it.

The discovery of 39 bodies at the posh Rancho Santa Fe estate on Wednesday marks the largest mass suicide on U.S. soil. On Nov. 18, 1978, more than 900 followers — mostly American — of cult leader Rev. Jim Jones died in Jonestown, Guyana, after drinking cyanide-laced punch.

The owner of the Rancho Santa Fe house, Sam Koutchesfahani, 43, and his wife, Fatteneh Moghadam Yekta, borrowed \$993,750 to buy the \$1.325 million mansion in 1994 from Richard D. Ferrier, county records show. Built in 1983 on 3.1 acres, the home is 9,228 square feet and has nine bedrooms, seven bathrooms and a four-car garage. It also has a tennis court and swimming pool.

Koutchesfahani has had the house listed for sale for some time, said real estate agent Alicia Crittenden.

She said she has tried to show the house to prospective buyers several times, but the men living there only allowed visitors for a few hours a day.

SUICIDE

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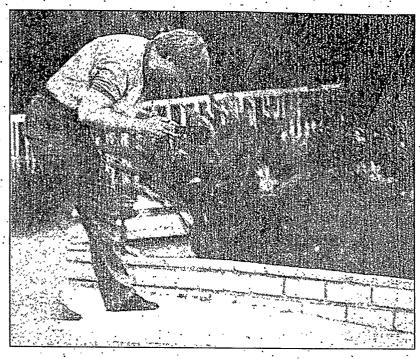
and blinds drawn. He entered through an unlocked side door and walked up a flight of stairs to find 10 dead men lying on their backs on the floor with their hands at their sides, Fulmer said. The deputy left the home and waited for a backup officer before re-entering.

Deputies eventually found the bodies of 39 white men between the ages of 18 and 24, Fulmer said. All were similarly dressed in dark pants and white tennis shoes. Deputies would not comment on what the men wore on their upper torsos. The bodies were found in various rooms of the nine-bedroom mansion. A sheriff's source said several computers in the home were still on when deputies found the bodies.

All 12 sheriff's homicide detectives, their supervisors and top administrators were at the scene working with the District Attorney's Office to get a search warrant before checking the house more thoroughly. Sheriff's authorities said deputies found no obvious signs of death, and there were no notes indicating why the men killed themselves, nor were there any religious props or writings.

"This is really weird. That house is as clean as a Safeway chicken," a ranking sheriff's official said.

Deputies Brunk and Laura Gacek, the first two on the scene, were taken to a local hospital as a



HAYNE PALMOUR / NORTH COUNTY TIMES

An investigator takes photographs of the ground in the backyard area of the home in Rancho Santa Fe.

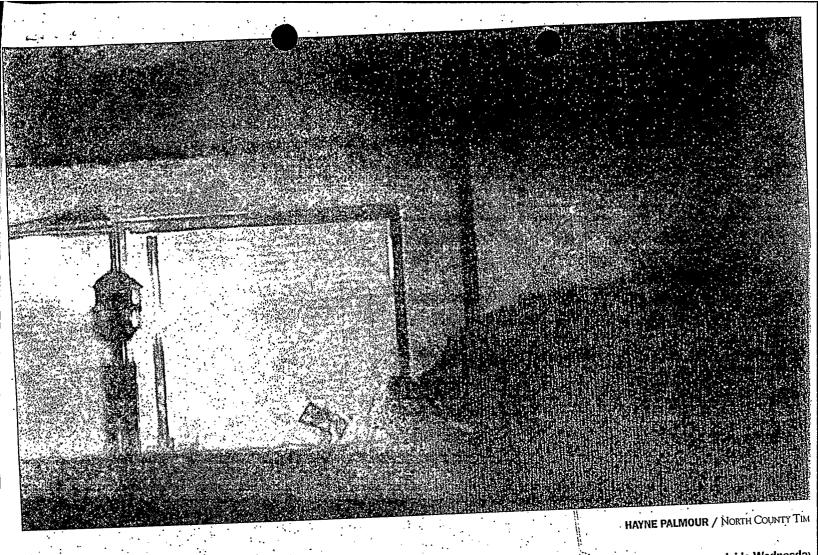
precaution because "there was an obvious pungent odor when they went into the home," Fulmer said. A county hazardous materials team was called out to the Rancho Santa Fe home to investigate the odor. Late Wednesday, Fulmer said Gacek and Brunk had been examined by doctors and appeared fine.

The last time next-door neighbor Bill Strong saw anyone enter the house was Saturday, when five to 10 men drove up in a white van with New Mexico license plates.

The Los Angeles County Coro-

ner's Office, providing mutual aid for the San Diego County Medical Examiner's Office, loaned two trucks to transport the bodies from Rancho Santa Fe to the Kearny Mesa morgue, investigator George Dickason said. It may take several days to conduct autopsies on all 39 bodies.

"The process of identification could potentially be the most difficult," medical examiner's investigator Ken Bell said. "We don't know what identifications these victims had on them, if any."



Deputies investigate the sealed windows on the lower floor in the back of a Rancho Santa Fe home, the scene of an apparent mass suicide Wednesday. As many as 39 male bodies, ranging in age from 18 to 24, were found in the house, authorities said.

Neighbors horrified by grisly discovery

DON STANZIANO, CLAIRE VITUCCI and HWEILEE KHOE

NORTH COUNTY TIMES

RANCHO SANTA FE — From his house Wednesday afternoon, Arnold Kapan watched as news helicopters circled overhead vying for the best shot of the property, handing out coffee



Bill Strong Neighbor

to the horde of reporters. He said the media hubbub reminded him of the O.J. Simpson case.

"That was a can of worms and now this, my golly," he said. "I'm telling my friends we don'to

see graffiti, people are nice here, nobody beeps at you on the road, and now this."

Kapan's home is one of five along tiny Colina Norte, the narrow, tree-lined street were the bodies of 39 young men were found Wednesday.

The 3-acre ranch at 18241 Colina Norte is both an unlikely and perfect place for a gruesome mass suicide.

Neighbors don't pay much attention to each other and saw little activity at the sprawling hill-top estate that is separated from nearby homes by a stucco wall and locked gate. The isolation of the home, now up for sale for \$1.6 million, allowed the residents to conduct their activities out of the neighbors' view. There are only five homes on the street, each separated by several acres.

"We don't go around being a Welcome Wagon," said Kapan, who moved with his wife to 18227. Colina Norte in SeptemIndicate page, newspaper, city, state

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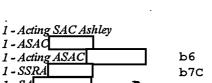
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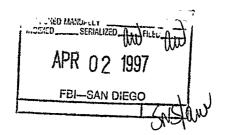
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NEIGHBOR

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ber from Pacific Palisades.

"I thought I was coming to

paradise," he said.

Rancho Santa Fe is not used to the kind of police and media attention that swarmed in Wednesday afternoon. The last time the exclusive enclave was in the national media was Nov. 5, 1992, when purported British spy Ian Spiro's wife and three children were found shot to death in their posh, rented home. Spiro's body was found three days later in Anza-Borrego State Park. Authorities ultimately declared the case a murder-suicide in 1995.

"Spiro, then this in Rancho" Santa Fe — unbelievable," Assistant Sheriff Myron Klippert said.

Neighbors along Colina Norte learned of the grisly discovery Wednesday as they returned home and saw San Diego County sheriff's deputies and media parked near their driveways. Police used yellow police tape to cordon off the nine-bedroom, seven-bathroom home from the media. From the bottom of the long winding driveway, the house was 🖟 not visible.

Eventually, as the media crowd grew, police moved the tape farther down the street toward El Camino Del Norte, where deputies were directing traffic and keeping onlookers in cars and on horseback moving along.

Rumors of some sort of religious group activities at the large home circulated among real-estate agents in the area recently.

Alicia Crittenden, an agent who owns horse stables nearby, tried to show the home several times over the past month to interested buyers, but could not get inside because the residents did not want their religious activities interrupted, she said.

"They very much kept to themselves," Crittenden said. "If you approached the house you

didn't see anything."

Despite the rumors, Crittenden said she was shocked to hear of the mass suicide there.

"It's unusual that such a situation would even be here," she

said. Another neighbor, 16-year-old Drummond Doroski, said he never saw anyone coming into or out of the house. "I wasn't really sure anybody was living there," he

Kapan said the owner of the house, Sam Koutchesfahani, checked in on the Kapans occasionally.

"He was talking about leasing out his house to a bunch of monks," Kapan said. "He was joking about it."

Staff Writers Timothy O'Hara, Jennifer Levitz-Peck and D. Wade Booth contributed to this report.

Rancho Santa Fe reels n shock over cult deaths

TAHLIA M. MARLIN and HWEILEE KHOE NORTH COUNTY TIMES

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RANCHO SANTA FE — In this rural community where neighbors merely wave at one another from behind closed car windows and privacy is a hot commodity, only one word describes the reaction here: shock.

"We used to think this was a slice of heaven; now it feels like a slice of hell," said one Rancho Santa Fe resident driving past the scene who declined to give her name.

Homeowners in this posh community gawked from the sidelines Thursday, a day after authorities discovered the bodies of 39 men and women, the victims of the largest mass suicide on U.S. soil.

They stood on the sidelines, defenseless to the horde of reporters and photographers who have invaded their quiet community to cover the religious cult's self-imposed demise.

Most residents, frustrated with the media vans lining the streets, satellite dishes overlooking their homes and portable bathrooms set up nearby, want life to return to normal — fast. Amid the rolling hills filled with fragrant eucalyptus trees and citrus groves, helicopters buzzed overhead as reporters from around the world set up camp near Colina Norte.

"This community likes its privacy," said Pete Smith, manager of the Rancho Santa Fe Association

"It's difficult to adjust to a sky full of helicopters and a parade of police cars."

"I've never seen anything like this, except maybe on TV," said

Tina Wiesehan, who lives near the now-notorious home at 18241 Colina Norte. "It's been crazy. We had helicopters overhead at daybreak. It's just nuts. All I want to know is when are we going to get back to business as usual?"

Wiesehan's American saddle horses weren't dealing well with the nearby frenzy.

The show horses acted disturbed and crazed throughout the night and into the morning, Wiesehan said, and her ponies were so frightened they remained tucked away in the barn all day.

Rancho Santa Fe is a neighborhood where prize horses wander the winding dirt trails, people drive around in decked-out Chevrolet Suburbans and BMWs and white picket fences serve as the only barriers between sprawling estates.

"I guess when you think about it, this is the perfect neighborhood for something like this to happen," said Vick Colby, who lives about five minutes from Colina Norte.

"Something like this doesn't happen at a tract-housing development. This area is so private it's probably more susceptible to something like this."

Despite the army of law enforcement officials guarding the area, gawkers and looky-loos couldn't help but try to get a glimpse of all the action.

The Kooken family was visiting San Diego from its home in Chicago when news of the mass suicides hit. The family ditched plans to go to Sea World on Thursday and instead headed to the grisly scene.

"We knew this was going to be like O.J.," said Jill Kooken, standing near her two daughters. "I was saddened when I heard Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

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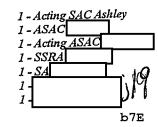
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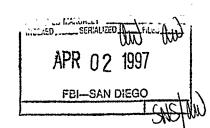
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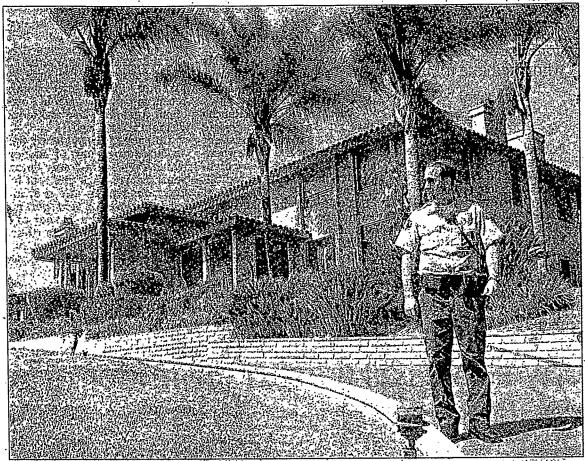
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BILL WECHTER / NORTH COUNTY TIMES

Sheriff's Deputy C.C. Davis walks away from the house in Rancho Santa Fe. 新生素等数元年(1)(1)

the news and wanted my kids to see what a tragedy suicide is ... This is a pretty unreal (scene)."

The 6,200-acre community, part of the unincorporated area of the county, was developed in

A common thread in the deestates divided by vast country-

And that may have played a part in the group's decision to plant itself here, residents said.

"This is a quiet neighborhood, away from the rest of the world," said George Autrique, holding the leashes of his six Italian greyhound and Shar Pei puppies, while a white stallion galloped in the background, "Shock doesn't sign of the homes was sprawling begin to describe it. This is a place of peace. At least it was a place of peace."

Mel Sawelson, president of the Rancho Santa Fe Association, said that if he had known that some 40 people were living in the house and conducting a business there, the association would have looked into it. The religious group designed World: Wide Web pages for business clients.

"Both would have been a violation of the covenants," he said. "This is a community of singlefamily houses, and you can't conduct a commercial enterprise in

vour home.".

As manager of the association, Smith wonders whether there was anything the association or the security patrol could have done to prevent the tragedy. And as the spotlight continues to glare upon Rancho Santa Fe, he wants to distance the quiet, rural and picturesque community from the grisly discovery.

Smith said the victims were renters who did not frequent the social centers where many Rancho Santa Fe residents gather.

"As renters they're not allowed to use the golf club or tennis club," Smith said.

"A lot of people congregate at these places, the community center and local schools."

"It's a terrific shock," said Howard Crull, 73, a retired Rancho Santa Fe resident. "It could be embarrassing for Rancho Santa Fe, but they weren't our residents."

Others, like teen-ager Ashley Beecroft, were baffled at why the religious group would seek salvation via the Hale-Bopp comet and a UFO they apparently believed was flying in the comet's tail. The group is called Heaven's Gate and mixed radical Christian fundamentalism with a belief of extraterrestrials.

"I'm confused as to why people would think aliens would follow the comet. They've seen the 'X-Files' too much," she said. "It sounds like a science fiction novel," she said, noting the novel "The Harvest," in which people who find out about an alien invasion fleet find safety by "losing their skin."

Staff writer Jennifer Levitz-Peck and correspondent Aaron Smith contributed to this story.

Web page business supported sect's life

CRAIG MILLER
NORTH COUNTY TIMES

To finance their final days on Earth awaiting a spaceship they believed was tailing the comet Hale-Bopp, members of the Heaven's Gate cult set up a company called Higher Source Contract Enterprises to design World Wide Web pages.

By all accounts, members were highly skilled on computers, and made enough to pay the \$7,000 monthly rent on the palatial Rancho Santa Fe house in which they took their lives.

Believed to be among the dead in the house was "Brother Logan," also known as Logan Lahson of Phoenix.

However, that name is not registered with the Arizona Department of Motor Vehicles and may be an alias.

Lahson filed trade-name papers with the Arizona Secretary of State on Dec. 12, 1995, to protect the Higher Source name, a clerk said Thursday.

He is listed as the owner of the contract services company with an address on North Bell Street in Phoenix. However, a newspaper reporter in that city who checked the building found the business abandoned. A telephone call to the number listed in state records was answered by a machine that confirmed only

the phone number.

All other investigative leads into the group in Phoenix have come to dead ends, said Sgt. Mike Torres, spokesman for the Phoenix Police Department.

Locally, U.S. Postal Inspector David Fast said the postal service has been trying to assist in Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

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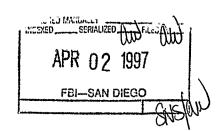
"Web page business supported sect's life"

Character:

Classification:

Submitting Office

San Diego Indexing:



BUSINESS

Continued from A1

the Sheriff's Department probe. However, the Post Office has seen no sign of mail coming out of or going to the house on Colina Norte, despite the apparent thriving business cult members operated.

There are more than 5,300 post office boxes rented in Rancho Santa Fe, but none connected to the cult's address, Fast said.

"We tried our best to find something for them, but ran into a dead end," Fast said.

Also believed among the dead is Heaven's Gate leader Marshall Applewhite, who has been preaching his philosophy since as early as 1972.

The remaining dead are from California, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, Washington, Ohio, Minnesota and Canada. Sheriff's officials aren't yet sure how they

Applewhite believed human bodies are temporary vehicles to contain the spirit until a space-

ship picked up members to transport them to a higher plane.

In a recent videotape, apparently made for cult members, he said the Earth will be "recycled" soon and it's time for followers to enter that higher plane.

A computer Web site for Heaven's Gate indicates the passing of comet Hale-Bopp signals the time of passage.

"You can follow us but you cannot stay here and follow us," Applewhite said on the videotape, which was aired on network news programs.

Another videotape obtained by news networks shows cult members expressing their desire to leave their "temporary vehicles" and go on to a better place.

The group came to North County in 1993 or 1994, and rented two homes, in Del Dios and Rancho Bernardo, before moving to Rancho Santa Fe.

Former neighbors in Rancho Bernardo and Del Dios said they were told the homes were rented as retreats for the group's leaders. One former neighbor described them as highly educated and very computer literate, adding that

they "had the machines."

Some thought it was suspicious that the group sold computers during garage sales at cut-rate prices.

Most of Higher Source's clients were in the music or entertainment business, including sites providing information on pop singer Madonna and several CD sales services. Local clients include British Masters of Vista, an on-line site for the sale of British cars and accessories, and Samia Rose Topiary of Encinitas.

Most of the Web sites include sophisticated graphics, elaborate layouts and audio clips.

About a year ago, Higher Source members approached the

Source members approached the San Diego Polo Club and eventually designed its Web site.

Club manager Tom Goodspeed

described members as quiet and polite. He said members often dressed in similar garb, all had close-cut hair — including the women — and they always worked in groups.

"They were very professional," Goodspeed said. "We got more for \$1,000 than other companies who paid a lot more."

Deadly cocktail used to end lives

D. WADE BOOTH, TIMOTHY O'HARA and HOLLY LOBELSON

NORTH COUNTY TIMES

RANCHO SANTA FE—Eighteen men and 21 women—self-described "angels"—left this world to chase a comet by washing down a mixture of phenobarbital and vodka and asphyxiating themselves in a mass suicide at a Rancho Santa Femansion.

Richard Ford, the only known survivor of the religious cult of computer programmers known as Heaven's Gate, was identified Thursday as the anonymous tipster who alerted authorities to the macabre scene a day earlier.

The cult's members, who ranged in age from 26 to 72, started killing themselves on the eve of the lunar eclipse Sunday and as the comet Hale-Bopp jetted past Earth, authorities said during a press conference at the Del Mar Fairgrounds.

Among the dead was group leader Marshall Herff Applewhite, a 65-year-old New Ager who attained fame in the 1970s for his preachings as head of a group the media called UFO Cult, the Medical Examiner's Office confirmed late Thursday.

Applewhite called himself Father John Do in the Rancho Santa Fe group.

In a methodical ritual begun over the weekend, the victims died in three waves, with the remaining members caring for the dying.

Ford, a 43-year-old Beverly Hills man, had recently left Heaven's Gate, returning to the estate Wednesday after receivIndicate page, newspaper, city, state

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FBI—SAN DIEGO

> SUICIDES

Continued from A1

ing a videotape and letter declaring the suicidal intentions.

Sheriff's homicide detectives interviewed Ford on Wednesday evening, gleaning bizarre details about the religious sect of traveling computer programmers whose business involved creating World Wide Web pages.

"He was upset about the death of his friends, but he was not surprised," sheriff's homicide Lt. Jerry Lipscomb said.

Ford told detectives of the cult's bizarre beliefs, a story that sounds more like science fiction than fact. The group's home page

on the Internet reaffirms this.

"They were very dogmatic in their desire to kill themselves in a systematic way. It's unbelievable," Lipscomb said "The reason they were doing this was to go to a better place."

The comet Hale-Bopp was the sign leading to that better place, according to their Web site.

"The joy is that our Older Member in the Evolutionary Level above human (the 'Kingdom of Heaven') has made it clear to us that Hale-Bopp's approach is the 'marker' we have been waiting for," the Web site reads. "Our 22 years of classroom here on planet Earth is finally coming to conclusion — 'graduation' from the Human Evolutionary Level."

Group members believed a spaceship was following the comet, and they hoped their souls would connect with it after they killed themselves, the Web page states. Scientists acknowledge that an object is trailing the comet, but it appears to be a chunk that has broken off, though is still in the comet's gravitational pull.

While searching the \$1.3 million, nine-bedroom mansion at 18241 Colina Norte, investigators found one of several computers still on with the image of Hale-Bopp on the screen, sheriff's Cmdr. Alan Fulmer said. The group members had been in the county since 1993 or '94, living in Rancho Santa Fe since October. They paid \$7,000 a month in rent to owner

Sam Koutchesfahani.

Koutchesfahani appeared briefly at the mansion Thursday but refused to talk to reporters. His lawyer said the group paid its rent in cash.

Cult members died after ingesting a mixture of vodka and phenobarbital-laced pudding and apple sauce, and then asphyxiating themselves with plastic bags. When found Wednesday afternoon, all but two of them had purple shrouds draped over their upper bodies. They all were found lying on their backs with their arms at their sides.

Detectives found recipes for the suicide mixture, some in trash cans, others in victims' pockets.

Because every member had close-cropped hair, sheriff's officials initially believed all the victims were men.

Ford, whose cult moniker was "Rio," received a package Tuesday, containing a videotape and a letter. "It indicated to him they were going to kill themselves," Lipscomb said. "The letter basically said that 'by the time you read this, we will all be dead."

Ford's Beverly Hills computercompany employer, Nick Matzorkis, drove Ford to the Rancho Santa Fe mansion Wednesday, but did not go inside with him. Ford entered through an unlocked side door and discovered his friends dead, Lipscomb said. He called 911 and returned to Beverly Hills.

Sheriff Bill Kolender said dispatchers received the call about 1:30 p.m. But because a "welfare check" isn't considered a high-priority call, deputies didn't respond until about 3 p.m., after another call came in from Beverly Hills Detective Sgt. Mike Corren. Ford or his employer called Beverly Hills police, too.

The cult members, dressed in black clothing with new, black Nike tennis shoes with a white swoosh, died in three groups over several days, officials said. Those who were last to die removed the plastic bags from the corpses, placed the shrouds over them and threw away the bags in backyard trash cans, authorities said at the press conference.

The final two victims might have been dead for less than 36

hours when Ford discovered them. They had the plastic bags over their heads, officials said.

After waiting several hours for a search warrant granted by telephone, detectives seized two videotapes and the victims' suitcases, duffel bags and belongings, which lay next to their bodies. Inside each of their bags were \$5 bills and some quarters, Medical Examiner Brian Blackbourne said.

Fulmer said the videotapes "were a basic farewell tape ... reasons why they are doing what they are doing, making their final exit, if you will."

Detectives found a library of extraterrestrial books, a map of the world and lines drawn to cities in the United States. Old shoes worn by cult members were found in the garage, neatly stacked on shelves. One 9 mm pistol was found in a suitcase. Drivers licenses, passports or birth certificates also were found in the shirt pockets or bags of cult members. The identifications linked them to New Mexico, Arizona, California, Texas, Utah, Ohio and Colorado.

A man and a woman had the same address and were apparently married. Officials would not disclose their names or those of other victims, except Applewhite.

None of the victims is originally from San Diego County, but if four are from the Los Angeles area, medical examiner's Investigator John Armendariz said.

During the press conference, sheriff's officials showed a three-minute video of the bodies inside the estate. Detectives found 16, bodies on cots and mattress downstairs. Beside some of them wegs bowls of a pudding-like substance and a cup of orange-colored linguid, believed to contain the vodka mixture. In five upstairs bedrooms, officials said they found bodies in bunk beds; others were on cots and mattresses.

Each cult member had an insignia, visible on the videotapes, bearing their cult nickname.

"You think to yourself, 'He's can these people do this to them selves, and seem to be doing well in what appears to be a thriving business?' It's just something that does not compute with me," Lipscomb said.

Victims' identifications speed response by

coroner

CHRIS MORAN and KAREN S. SMITH NORTH COUNTY TIMES

SAN DIEGO — Whatever their beliefs about what happens to their souls, the 39 people who killed themselves in Rancho Santa Fe assured their bodies would be taken care of quickly.

Investigators with the county Medical Examiner's Office said most of the people placed identification in their shirt and pants pockets. If they found nothing on the bodies, the investigators usually had to look no farther than the small duffel bag each person had packed.

Relatives of several victims were formally notified about the deaths Thursday, county spokesman Mark Merker said. But many "just have not indicated any interest in coming" to claim the bodies.

A day earlier, authorities discovered the bodies in "a peaceful, neat, immaculate" manner throughout the house, Investigator Mark Malamatos said. They were all on first- and second-floor bedrooms in the nine-bedroom

mansion at 18241 Colina Norte. The duffel bags were at the foot of the beds.

"It looked like their suitcases were packed," he said.

The bags, all similar looking, contained clothing, personal belongings and various forms of identification, such as drivers' licenses and passports, the investigators said.

All but two of the bodies were covered in purple shrouds.

"There was no disorder in the house," fellow Investigator George Dickason said. "There was no trauma."

Preliminary test results indicate all 39 died after ingesting a mixture of phenobarbital, a depressant, and vodka. Plastic bags with elastic ties were also found outside the home.

The victims, members of a religious cult, died in three waves over the last few days, officials said.

Inside the home, appliances were off and the air conditioning was on, the investigators said.

Malamatos, Dickason and other investigators arrived just after midnight Thursday. Four Los AnIndicate page, newspaper, city, state

A8 North County Times Escondido, CA

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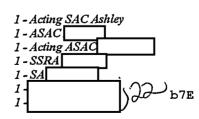
"Victims' identifications speed response by coroner"

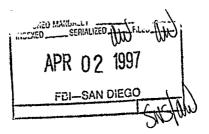
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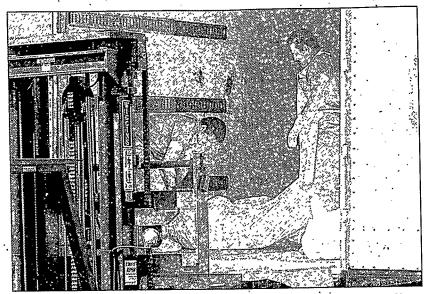
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DAVID CARLSON / NORTH COUNTY TIMES

Two employees of the county Medical Examiner's Office move a body from a refrigerated truck trailer to a forklift to take to the Kearny Mesa coroner's facility for an autopsy.

ed seven San Diego counterparts inside the home. They split into two teams, one upstairs, another downstairs.

Early Thursday morning, two refrigerated trucks on loan from

1

geles County investigators assist- Los Angeles County shuttled the bodies away from the exclusive enclave to the Medical Examiner's Office in traffic-choked Kearny Mesa to begin their itinerant course through the bureaucracy of death.

> Coroner and Medical Examiner's Office personnel unloaded the bodies, stuffed in body pouches and then wrapped in white sheets for easier handling, onto a forklift, which carried some of the bodies into the office. Others' were left in the refrigeration truck behind the building.

The stench of decomposing bodies could be smelled when workers opened the truck to bring them inside.

At 11:30 a.m., an American Red Cross truck arrived with drinks and snacks for staffers, Red Cross spokeswoman Rene Ouaresma said.

All day, dozens of members of the media climbed up on ladders and peered over a screened chain link fence at the back of the building to observe the unloading of the bodies.

News crews filmed live, helicopters hovered overhead in the morning and out-of-town reporters gathered too, waiting to get news of the victims and their families.

Malamatos said the initial examination of bodies could last through the weekend. Patholo-

gists, too tired to continue, coinpleted eight autopsies Thursday. county spokesman Merker said:

The arduous task of notifying next of kin began as callers from as far as Washington, New York. North Carolina and South Dakota began phoning in on a special mationwide toll-free hot line, (800) 600-0646. During one 30-minute period Thursday afternoon, 37 calls were logged.

As of 2:30 p.m., the hot line had yielded an average of 90 cal per hour.

Some callers said they hadn't been in touch with their relatives in years while others expressed "great shock and disbelief." Merker said.

One came from an East Coast father who had not spoken to his son for a long time and feared his involvement in a religious cult. said Dickason.

After going through the victims' belongings and bags to confirm identities, officials formally notified 12 families that a relative had died, Merker said. Investigators stopped trying to reach next of kin at 10 p.m. and will begin again this morning.

Tape: Heaven's Gate leader ordered suicides

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Film from 1996 shows Applewhite telling members to leave bodies behind

New York Daily News

NEW YORK — With his eyes wide, a smile on his lips and speaking in a sing-song voice, Marshall Applewhite told his followers they could hitch a ride to salvation on a spaceship trailing the Hale-Bopp comet.

Their only "boarding pass" was to "shed their containers" — destroying their human bodies to get to the vaunted "Next Level," declared the man variously known as Do, and Father John.

"This time is so exciting to us, even though we know that it is close to our end, and that is why it is exciting to us," Applewhite said in an Oct. 5, 1996, video tape.

""Our 22 years of classroom here on planet Earth is finally coming to conclusion — 'graduation' from the Human Evolutionary Level. We are happily prepared to leave 'this world' and go with Ti's crew," according to a transcript of the video tape on the band's Web site.

Ti is an apparent reference to 1970s — lived, worked and died his longtime partner — and former asylum nurse — Bonnie Lu sion they called their temple.

Nettles, who died 12 years ago. 1970s — lived, worked and died in a spotless, nine-bedroom manmer asylum nurse — Bonnie Lu sion they called their temple.

Before renting the \$1.3 million

Applewhite said that because some scholars believe Christ actually was born in 4 B.C., 1997 is the real first year of the new millennium.

He frequently invokes images

of the Crucifixion — perhaps explaining why the mass suicide came days before Easter.

The rantings of the man believed to have ordered the deaths of 38 of his minions — and who reportedly died along with them — were revealed Thursday as the nation reeled from one of the worst mass suicides in U.S. history.

The cultists—believed to have roots in a group known as The UFO Society in the 1960s and 1970s—lived, worked and died in a spotless, nine-bedroom mansion they called their temple.

Before renting the \$1.3 million mansion in October, they were said to have roamed the West and Southwest.

They called themselves monks and answered to Father John, with a Brother Logan second in b6 b7C

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FBI—SAN DIEGO

command. Two were black, a few were Latino and the rest were white.

The members addressed one another as brother and sister—bizarrely appropriate, because they looked as if they were related, dressing in matching black shirts and sporting the same buzz cut. They didn't drink, smoke or have sex and reportedly believed they were sent to America as angels.

They lived by a strict set of rules—when to wake up, what to eat and how to cook, following recipes to the letter. While devoted to their beliefs, they weren't proselytizers.

To the rare outsider, who saw them pounding away at the computers they used to run Higher Source — a business that set up Web sites — there was little to distinguish the cultists from one another.

"A lot of them shared incredibly similar features. They all looked very androgynous," said Nick Matzorkis, a Beverly Hills businessman who employs a former cultist.

Matzorkis said one of the female group members had mentioned the comet several months

"She told me they believed that there was a UFO following behind this comet," Matzorkis said. "Using the comet to shield them from Earth, they felt that the ship was coming to pick them up."

up."

"To me, they seemed like a group of Trekkie-type individuals," he said.

Matzorkis said members sent the employee — whom he identi-

fied as Rio DiAngelo — two video tapes earlier this week describing the suicide scheme.

In his rant on the group's Heaven's Gate Web site, Applewhite hinted at the mass death and warned the world: "Planet Earth is about to be recycled — your only chance is to evacuate with us."

"We're not saying that planet Earth is coming to an end," he said. "We're saying that planet Earth is about to be refurbished, spaded under and have another chance to serve as a garden for future human civilization."

Applewhite claimed he was the reincarnation of Christ and came back to Earth in the early 1970s: "I must admit that I am here again."

Also returning to Earth was Ti—the cult's god, referred to as "Our Heavenly Father."

THE MANSION

A Real Estate Jewel With an **Eccentric Cast**

By ANNE-MARIE O'CONNOR and GREG KRIKORIAN TIMES STAFF WRITERS

RANCHO SANTA FE-Before it became the elegant coffin of an . apocalyptic cult, the \$1.6-million estate at the end of the Colina Norte cul-de-sac was simply prime Southern California property: three acres on a hilltop. Seven. bedrooms, 71/2 baths, an elevator. Outside a pool, tennis court, even a putting green.

The glossy pages of a real estate bible annointed the residence, with its sweeping ocean and canyon views, one of San Diego's dream

But for real estate agents, showing the luxury home at the top of the long, winding driveway was a challenge.

First, there was Brother Logan, a lanky leader of the commune that rented the sprawling Spanish-style home for \$10,000 a month. Tall and quietly intense, he routinely restricted access to the property to a four-hour period, one day a week, and reminded one agent of the amiably spooky butler Lurch from television's "The Addams Family."

Then there was the 9,200square-foot home's austere interior. The bedrooms, with metalframe bunk beds and desktop computers, looked as if they belonged

Please see HOUSE, A17

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HOUSE: 'Definitely Weirg,' Agent Says

Continued from A1

in dormitories. The living room was virtually devoid of furnishings, except a large-screen television with jumbo speakers. And on the fireplace mantel was a stark, framed drawing of an extraterrestrial. Underneath the rendering was the caption: "A member of the next level."

One real estate agent said the place reminded her of

a spaceship.

In fact, Brother Logan and others would tell agents, it was their "ship." The group saw it as nothing more than a way station on their journey back to a distant star that was their "home," the agents said Thursday.

To get to their celestial home, their literature said, adherents had to be willing to leave behind their

"human body."

"An E.T. you must become before you die to go to heaven," announced an eerie page from their World Wide Web site last September. "This entering into their glorified or heavenly body takes place aboard a next level space craft above the Earth's surface."

owever prophetic their story of "space travel" seems now, it barely drew notice in the affluent enclave of Rancho Santa Fe. Home to a reported 5% of the nation's millionaires, according to local real estate agents, it is an address coveted for its privacy as much as its rustic beauty, a place where residents are accustomed to the occasional well-heeled eccentric.

. It was this combination of isolation, respectful neighborly distance and stunning natural beauty that made the trilevel home the perfect setting for a seemingly gentle clan to quietly prepare their macabre

departure from Earth.

Six months ago, real estate agent Marvin Caldwell and a partner, who declined to be identified, first met Brother Logan and about a dozen others from his group. The occasion was a yard sale outside a similar hilltop estate the group was then renting, not far from the one where 39 bodies were discovered Wednesday.

"He said they were selling the stuff because they were planning on moving," Caldwell said. "He said

they were preparing to take a long journey."

Several times, Caldwell's partner recalled, the group members slipped up when they described their plan. "They said they were planning on moving to another ship. They would slip sometimes and catch themselves and say 'home,' "the partner said. That previous residence, which went for about

That previous residence, which went for about \$7,000 a month, was apparently one of several the group had rented in the San Diego area over the last several years, the agents said they were told by Brother Logan. Others were in the nearby Fairbanks Ranch and the Poway/Rancho Bernardo vicinity.

"A lot of times, they lived in properties that were up for sale so they could rent month-to-month," Caldwell recalled. "They didn't want to get tied up in a lease."

The Colina Norte estate was such a place.

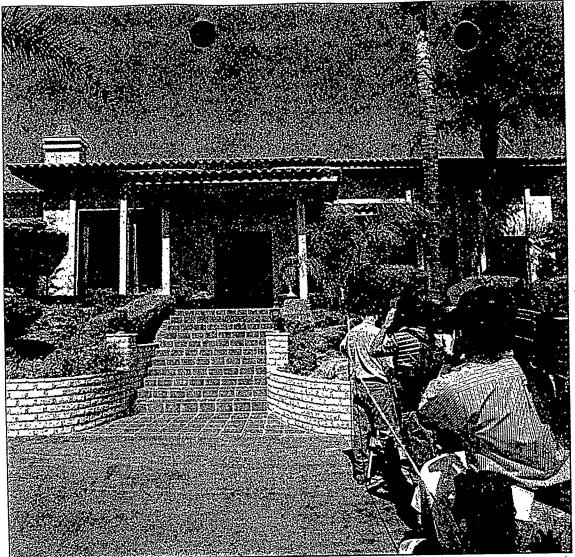
On the market for almost a year, it became home to Brother Logan and the group last October, though they apparently were still paying rent at the other home while they sold off most of its contents, including brand new television sets and furniture.

Perched atop one of the highest lots in Rancho Santa Fe, boasting majestic views in an area famous for its winding canyons lined with coastal live oaks, the Colina Norte property went begging for suitors and never received an offer, agents said.

Scott Warren of Dyson & Dyson Real Estate Associates said that before he showed the property two weeks ago to a wealthy Southern California couple, he had been warned by a listing agent that the tenants were "a little strange."

"That can mean anything in Rancho Santa Fe," he said. "There are a lot of people with a lot of money, and they can be a little eccentric, or decorate things a little differently."

He and the couple were greeted at the door by a



MARK BOSTER / Los Angeles Times

Photographers gather Thursday in front of the seven-bedroom mansion where 39 bodies were found.

"Brother-something," a gray-haired man described as about 6-foot-5, very calm and serene, who wore jeans and a T-shirt and had an almost military bearing. Like the rest of the men and women they would meet, he had very short hair.

"He was definitely in charge," Warren said. "He was very cordial, but very intimidating. He had a heavy presence."

The leader asked them to take off their shoes and don surgical booties. The request was not unusual, Warren said, because homeowners sometimes ask buyers to remove their shoes to protect their Oriental rugs and parquet floors. But this time the reason was different, he said.

"He asked us to take off our shoes because they were a religious group and shoes were contaminating,' Warren said. ·

He led them into a large living room with a 60-inch TV screen and "a lot of computer monitors and sound equipment." Then he took them up to an exercise room on another level that had a ballet barre and mirrors. This room had a score of computers and people quietly typing away. "They were working like little worker bees," Warren recalled.

The bedrooms too had computers.
"It was definitely weird," said Warren. "But I've been in real estate for 20 years, and you see a lot of weird stuff."

When authorities arrived at the home Wednesday afternoon, they found bodies in seven of its rooms. Lying serenely on comforters covering neatly made beds, the dead were several to a room except in the master bedroom where there was only the body of a 66-year-old white male.

The rooms where the bodies were found all had stacks of videos and vases with fresh cut flowers. Officials said that in one big room the group had set up a sort of shrine where two people, presumably the group's leaders, could address the others.

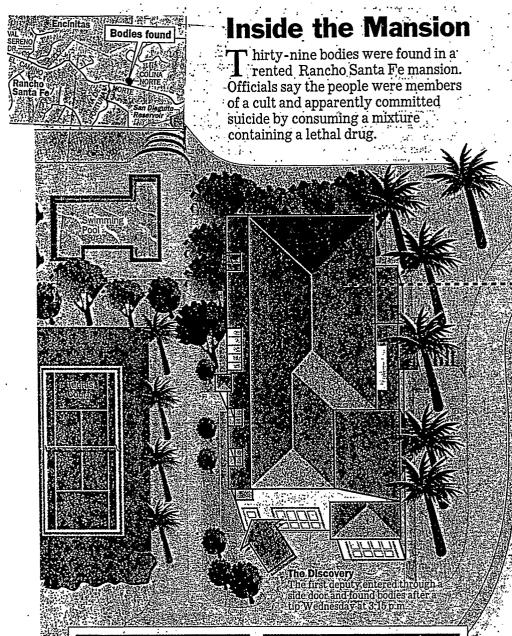
three weeks before the grim discovery, real estate agent Caldwell and his partner had visited the property with two different groups of prospective buyers. As always, they were met by Brother Logan who allowed them inside, this time without an appointment.

And as always, Caldwell and his partner said, the group worked away on computers as visitors toured the home, which included what the agents described as a vast library of books.

"Every morning, Brother Logan told us, they got up. at 4 a.m., got their telescope and looked at their home star in the northeast sky," Caldwell said. "To him, it was not a spiritual experience. He was looking at his home."

When she heard about the deaths of those she had seen only weeks ago, Caldwell's partner said, her first reaction was not so much shock but grief.

"I felt sad. I cried when I heard," she said. "I suddenly realized what they were referring to as their iourney.



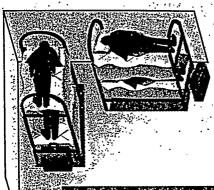
Women: 21 Men: 18

Ages: 20 to 72

Members of the Heaven's Gate group had outlined their philosophy on a Web site.

Owner: Sam Koutchesfahani Purchased: May, 1994, for \$1.3 million Rented to: "Brother Logan," \$10,000/month Size: 7 bedrooms, 7.5 bathrooms; 9,200 square feet on three acres of land Asking price: On market at \$1.6 million

A systematic plan for the mass suicide was apparently carried out in waves. Although exact locations of bodies has not been released, many of the bodies were found in bedrooms with bunk beds.



Common Characteristic

The bodies shared these traits:

- Close-cropped hair ...
- · Black shoes, black pants
- Lying on back
- · Most had upper bodies draped in purple cloth
- Packed suitcase at foot of bed
- Carrying \$5 bills or quarters
- Some had eyeglasses at side
- Identification packet in pocket

The Death Plan

The San Diego County coroner said the group carried out the plan over three days:

Group 1

A group of 15 people killed themselves. The second group cleaned up afterward.

Group 2

Fifteen more people committed suicide. The third group cleaned up afterward.

Group 3 ·

Seven people killed themselves. The remaining two removed plastic bags from the seven and then killed themselves.

Lethal Mixture Investigators

found the fatal recipe in most 🎨 victims' pockets. ■ Take pudding

- or applesauce. and mix with phenobarbital, drink it down 🌊 with alcohol, lie back and relax.
- Plastic bags on heads may have been used to hasten death.

Diego County Sheriff's Dept. and Coroner, Times reports

39 in Cult Left ecipes of Death

Believed Alien Ship

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A1 Los Angeles Times Los Angeles, CA

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"39 in Cult Left Recipes of Death"

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Would Take Them to Heaven

Officials Describe Careful, Ritualistic Suicide. The Dead, Ages 20 to 72, Included 21 Women

By STEPHANIE SIMON, NICK ANDERSON and TONY PERRY TIMES STAFF WRITERS

RANCHO SANTA FE, Calif.—
The 39 men and women who died
in an apparent mass suicide here
left behind mystical computer
postings and matter-of-fact videos
explaining that they were eager to
graduate from their human shells
and ascend into heaven on an alien
spaceship—and to speed their way,
they planned to whip up puddings
tainted with coma-inducing sedatives.

Authorities investigating the case said Thursday that the victims, who ranged in age from 20 to 72, meticulously planned their deaths.

They wrote out recipes for lethal drug overdoses to be swallowed with pudding or applesauce and washed down with a swig of vodka, though the group preached abstinence from alcohol. They also donned matching black outfits of pants, oversized shirts and brandnew Nikes. And they delegated two colleagues to remain alive long enough to clean up after everyone else.

Packed flight bags or suitcases stood at the foot of every mattress, and many of the victims carried \$5 bills and rolls of quarters. The bodies were discovered Wednesday afternoon in various states of decomposition; the house reeked of rotting flesh, officials said.

A 15-member team from the San Diego County medical examiner's office worked through Wednesday night and Thursday morning removing the bodies in white body bags and hauling them away in refrigerated trucks.

Later, sheriff's officials released an eerie video of the bodies before they were removed. In the oddly antiseptic home, where the most personal touches were a box of tissues and a vase of flowers, the bodies were found lying on white or yellow comforters, some with eyeglasses folded neatly on the pillows. An abandoned wheelchair stood beside one bed; one of the bodies was tucked into a green and blue plaid blanket.

Please see DEATHS, A18

b6
b7C

1 - Acting SAC Ashley
1 - ASAC
1 - Acting ASAC
1 - SSRA
1 - SA
1 - Case file
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APR 02 1997

FBI—SAN DIEGO



DEATHS: Group Apparently

Planned Suicide Precisely

Continued from A1

The deceased belonged to a group called Heaven's Gate, which appears to be the successor to a 1970s cult known as the Overcomers or the Human Individual Metamorphosis that flickered in and out of vogue over the last two decades, preaching a philosophy that blends biblical teachings about Jesus with dire warnings about satanic angels taking over Earth.

One former member who left

One former member who left Heaven's Gate just six weeks ago, and who identifies himself as Rio D'Angelo, said he believes that the group was totally wiped out in the mass suicide, said D'Angelo's employer, Beverly Hills businessman Nick Matzorkis.

Matzorkis said D'Angelo now believes that he was chosen to survive to pass on the group's message—a message that members were so eager to spread that they even wrote a script for a movie about their beliefs and urged Matzorkis to help produce it.

Three Waves of Suicides

Based on evidence recovered from the spotless two-story mansion—where the dead bodies lay on bunk beds and mattresses—San Diego County Medical Examiner Brian Blackbourne said he believed that the cult split up into three groups to commit suicide.

The first group may have died as much as three days ago. Preliminary autopsy results indicated that alcohol and phenobarbital were involved—a combination that would match the recipes that investigators discovered torn up in garbage cans or folded in the pockets of the deceased.

Blackbourne said deputies also found plastic bags tied with elastic bands in the garbage behind the house, which could have been used to suffocate the victims and speed death. Blackbourne speculated that the group members tapped to die in the second or third suicide waves may have removed the plastic bags from the heads of their deceased colleagues, tidied the house and then covered the bodies with silky purple cloths.

The final two to die, he said, were not shrouded in the purple cloths. They had plastic bags over their heads.

Blackbourne would not comment on whether the Heaven's Gate members could have pulled the bags on their heads themselves after swallowing the drugs, or whether someone had to have helped them. But Sheriff's Cmdr. Alan Fulmer said there was no indication that anyone had left the home alive after the suicides.

"It seemed to be a group decision," Blackbourne said. "It was very planned, sort of immaculately carried out."

Phenobarbital, a prescription drug used for seizure disorders, is a long-acting barbiturate with hypnotic or sedative properties. The drug usually kicks in within an hour, and its effects can last up to 16 hours.

Overdoses typically trigger a progression of symptoms beginning with difficulty breathing and followed by lowered body temperature, fever, fluid in the lungs and coma.

Alcohol accelerates the drug's actions—as described in the best-selling book "Final Exit," which lays out a suicide method strikingly similar to the one Heaven's Gate apparently chose.

apparently chose.

"Because this is a long-acting barbiturate, it takes a long time to die from it," said Dr. Greg Thompson, director of the Drug Information Center at Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center. Even given the alcohol, he said, "this would have been a sleepy death, but a long one."

Because the victims all wore baggy clothes and had severely cropped hair, Fulmer said his deputies had initially mistaken them all for young men. In truth, there were 21 women and 18 men in the group.

Most were in their 40s, though two men were in their 20s and one woman was 72. Fulmer said the deceased included two African Americans and a couple of Latinos. The rest were white.

Most of the bodies had identification folded neatly in the pocket of the baggy black shirt: driver's licenses, birth certificates or even passports. The largest contingents came from New Mexico and Texas, but Blackbourne also identified victims from Utah, Minnesota, Arizona and Ohio as well as four from Southern California. One person had a birth certificate from Canada.

Posthumous Statements

s news of the tragedy spread around the world— with foreign correspondents from several countries staked out in front of the house—families with missing relatives flooded the San Diego County coroner's office with anxious calls. Blackbourne would

not release the names of the deceased cult members until relatives had been notified.

Even as the grim business of conducting autopsies and notifying relatives continued, several of the Heaven's Gate members were speaking out posthumously—through a lengthy letter and brief video and through various Internet postings.

One white-haired member of the group appeared on a video addressed to the news media to explain that his senior leader had determined that it was time to move onto the "next level."

A female member cast the suicide in a slightly less mystical tone, saying on the tape: "Maybe they're crazy, for all I know. But I don't have any choice but to go for it, because I've been on this planet for 31 years and there's nothing here for me." The group's pending suicide appealed to her, she said, because "if that's what it takes, that's better than being around here with absolutely nothing to do."

The Heaven's Gate group left a similar video—this one bearing farewell messages from 38 of the 39 victims—on a table in a conference room in the sparsely furnished house, Fulmer said.

In snippets of the video aired on ABC's "Nightline," several cult members talked of their excitement about abandoning 9-to-5 work and traveling to the "next level." As one woman put it: "Everyone in this class wanted something more than this world had to offer."

Praising their leaders, the cult members emphasized that they were not being coerced into suicide. "I am doing this of my own free will. . . . It is not something someone brainwashed me into or convinced me of or did a con job on," one man said. "If anybody feels bad about that, that's just their problem."

In addition to leaving the farewell video for police to find, the Heaven's Gate members went to some effort to disseminate their ideas through videos and letters.

Portents in Videos

In what now appears to have been a portent of their suicide, the group last fall sent a video and letter about their plans to depart Earth for a "Kingdom of Heaven" to J. Gordon Melton, a nationally prominent authority on alternative religious groups, in Santa Barbara. Melton said he received the material in October—the same month the nomadic Heaven's Gate moved into Rancho Santa Fe—but did not have time to review it in detail.

More recently, the group sent a video to the Rev. Rick Strawcutter, pastor of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in Adrian, Mich. A church spokesman said Strawcutter had no idea what the package contained and didn't open it until Thursday.

"It was just a freak thing that they sent it to him," said a church staffer. "Why him?"

Sheriff's officials in rural Lenawee County, Mich., near the Ohio border, described Strawcutter as an anti-government "zealot" who has fought state and local laws requiring vehicle license plates and challenged the sheriff's authority to issue speeding tickets.

Closer to home, the Heaven's Gate members sent a package to former member D'Angelo in Los Angeles this week. D'Angelo, who is in his early 40s, said that in the video, group members spoke with excitement about "moving forward to the next stage," Matzorkis said.

According to Matzorkis, the let-

According to Matzorkis, the letter stated: "By the time this letter is being read, we will all have shed our containers"—the term Heaven's Gate members used for their bodies.

After reviewing the material, D'Angelo marched into Matzorkis' office Wednesday morning, told him that he believed that a mass suicide had occurred and asked for the day off. Within minutes, the two jumped into Matzorkis' car and sped south to see for themselves.

When they arrived at the Heaven's Gate house, Matzorkis waited outside while D'Angelo went inside for 10 minutes. "He looked as white as a sheet," Matzorkis recalled. "He said, "They did it. They committed suicide," Matzorkis said. "He told me that every existing member committed suicide."

. The two then called the Beverly Hills Police Department and the San Diego County Sheriff's Department, tipping off authorities. Matzorkis said he had met and become friendly with up to 15 members of the cult long before hiring D'Angelo to design World Wide Web pages for his company, InterAct Entertainment Group. Through his informal chats with them, he said, he came to know them as quirky but competent programmers, who had shaved heads and usually wore dark pants and tennis shoes. They told him they liked to meditate, observed celibacy and avidly followed the television series "Star Trek."

"They were 'Star Trek' junkies," he said.

Heaven's Gate members would often prod outsiders to join their cause, he said. They especially pushed him, telling him that their friendship could have a "greater purpose" than merely designing snazzy Web pages. In one e-mail message Matzorkis received from the group in September, they sought to enlist him to help them spread the word about Heaven's Gate

The e-mail read: "We are at an extremely critical crossroads—considering going significantly more public than we ever have in our history." Then the group asked Matzorkis to come to one of their meetings, adding: "We suspect you will not find the meeting boring or routine."

A real estate agent who had met members of the group said they arose at 4 a.m. every day to gaze at a star in the northeastern sky that they considered their home.

The various communiques from Heaven's Gate do not mention that

practice. But they do spell out the group's philosophy in rambling detail.

Though they lived in a sevenbedroom mansion complete with putting green, sauna and elevator, the Heaven's Gate members loaded their Internet messages with disdainful comments about society's obsession with material goods.

They wrote that the satanic "space aliens" who run the modern world use a materialistic credo to try to blind human beings to the truth. And they warned people not to be duped by societal conventions such as marriages, mortgages and credit cards.

Despite this ascetic philosophy, however, Heaven's Gate maintained an impressively well-stocked pantry. Members did seek out—and snag—lucrative contracts for computer programming through their company, called Higher Source:

Others familiar with the group, however, said members always offered low bids on their computer work and did not seem to be

focusing on finances in recent weeks. Rather, they said that Heaven's Gate members, who referred to one another as "brother" and "sister," indicated that they would be taking a journey or immersing themselves in a religious ritual around Easter.

The most dedicated Heaven's Gate members apparently saw suicide as a way to "graduate" from their confinement on Earth into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Internet communications that shaking off all earthly ties might be difficult. "The dilemma," they wrote, "is we are here, and most humans are thoroughly 'hooked' to humanity." But they insisted that committing suicide would be worthwhile because after death, their souls would ascend to a higher level of development.

The group did caution that not everyone could reach the Kingdom of Heaven by committing suicide. Only disciples of the kingdom's "representative" on Earth could achieve this nirvana, they wrote.

And studying required sacrifice: leaving behind "family, sensuality, selfish desires, your human mind and even your human body if it be required of you."

Higher Source's Internet communiques indicated that members saw themselves as fighting an apocalyptic battle against society. They accurately predicted that they would be tarred as "cultists" or "radicals"—but that they preferred to think of themselves as candidates to enter a glorious new world.

The Heaven's Gate followers left behind hundreds of pages explaining the story that drew them to suicide. But authorities warned that outsiders may never be able to understand the cult's reasoning.

"We may never know the question that so many people are asking—that is, why did they do this?" San Diego County Sheriff Bill Kolander said. "Who or what would make 39 people take their lives in this manner?"

Or, as Gov. Pete Wilson put it: "To call it bizarre is, I think, to understate it."



The body of a victim lies on a mattress, shrouded by a purple cloth. Below, officials load van with bodies and flight bags found in house.

PETER H. KING

California's Bitter Cliche Gets Fodder

SAN DIEGO

f course it happened in California. Where else would 39 keyboard-tapping monks, holed up in a \$10,000-a-month adobe mansion in what the real estate agents here tout as "the Beverly Hills of San Diego," choose to "shed their containers" and hitch a ride to the Next Level on a spacecraft said to be trailing the Comet Hale-Bopp?

Iowa? . Kansas?

The county medical examiners who brought down the bodies in refrigerated trucks Thursday told of finding little travel bags near the dead, packed for the trip. Some had carried five-dollar bills and loose change. This money, it was whispered outside the Colina Norte mansion, was to cover the toll fee for crossing into the beyond.

"How could anybody want to kill themselves in such a beautiful place?" a woman named Jill Kooken was saying after the trucks rumbled away to the morgue. She was a tourist from Chicago. She said mere curiosity had drawn her to the place where the California cultists died, along with the fact that her daughter wanted to watch the television crews work. She wore a bandanna festooned with happy faces.

Of course, most of the dead were not exactly from California. They almost always come from someplace else, drifting out from the corn states, the Southwest desert, the Eastern cities, to make their stand on the continent's edge. William Money, first of California's legendary cult leaders, was a Scotsman who migrated to Los Angeles in 1840 only after—his telling—he received his marching orders from Jesus on a New York street corner.

Jim Jones founded his Peoples Temple in Indiana and obliterated it in the Guyanese jungle. And yet, because his church gained prominence in San Francisco, he was to go down as one more piece of evidence in the case of Normalcy vs. the Lotus Eaters. So, too, will these poor lost children of something called Heaven's Gate be attached to the list of crazed Californians. It will matter little that, according to the driver's licenses and passports they tucked carefully into their kit bags, all but a few had come from elsewhere-New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, Arizona.

The cliche has been fed anew. It is a well established stereotype. Listen to journalist Bruce Bliven, writing about California in 1935: "Here is the world's prize collection of cranks, semi-cranks, Please see KING, A14

A1 Los Angeles Times Los Angeles, CA

newspaper, city, state

Indicate page,

Date: Edition:

Friday, 3/28/97

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KING: Cult Deaths Provide New Fonder for Cliche of the Land of Fruits and Nuts

Continued from A1

placid creatures whose bovine expression shows that each of them is studying, without much hope of success, to be a high-grade moron, angry or ecstatic exponent of food fads, sunbathing, ancient Greek costumes, diaphragm-breathing. And the imminent second coming of Christ."

Callers to talk radio—its own sort of cult, no?—were quick to make the connections Thursday, linking the madness at Rancho Santa Fe to Manson and Jonestown and beyond.

"Why does this stuff seem to happen only in California?" Alan from Vista wondered aloud on one AM talk show. "It must be the water or something."

"Let's hope it's not the water," the show host replied earnestly. "I mean, that's another conspiracy theory we can get into later...."

ell, it does no good to be overly defensive. Perhaps there is something to this notion that geography can influence lunacy. Why do so many cults come to attach themselves here? It is a question that has been asked for as long as there has been a California. Curt Gentry, in "The Last Days of the Late, Great State of California," listed the leading theories.

"According to one, in moving to California people wanted a new start; they shopped not only for a new

job, new house, new furniture, new auto, new friends, but also for a new religion. . . Another explanation had it that California was so democratized, so lacking in a clearly defined society, that people craved something extra-exclusive. Still another thesis claimed there were so many other distractions in California life that religion, to compete, had to be startling, sensational, different."

It's possible that some of these mystic travelers expect too much of a place. To grow up in, say, Fresno is to regard the California Dream as something of an inside joke, a booster's hustle. The literature, and cult-awareness programs, are filled with case studies of disappointed migrants who came here seeking transformation, only to find themselves no less miserable than they were back in Des Moines. Remember that Manson, son of Cincinnati, headed west with the dream of becoming a Beatle, not a mass killer.

And maybe it is, most simply, the weather. As John Steven McGroarty, poet-historian, pointed out a half-century ago: "Los Angeles is the most celebrated of all incubators of new creeds, codes of ethics, philosophies—no day passes without the birth of something of a nature never heard of before. It is a breeding place and a rendezvous of freak religions. But this is because its winters are mild, thus luring the pale people of thought to its sunny gates."

Finally, tolerance must be added to the "Why

California?" list. Certainly the state can be forgiving of weirdness. Across the dial, the radio talk kept evolving Thursday into debates over what differences, if any, there were between the Heaven's Gate travelers and the early Christians. They all died for their religious beliefs, declared one caller after another. From there, the discussions typically would lurch toward the enigma of Dr. Kevorkian.

ndeed, Rancho Santa Fe had taken little notice of the newcomers at 18241 Colina Norte. "Meet your new neighbors," the owner of the house had told Bill Strong, who lives next door. "They're going to be opening a convent." The conversation occurred last fall, while the two men hosed down their rooftops in anticipation of a brush fire. Strong recalled that his reaction was only to laugh: "I thought it was a joke." Still, when the vans with out-of-state plates began arriving with loads of young strangers and computer equipment, nobody seemed to feel a need to get nosy.

"They seemed odd," said Tom Goodspeed of the Rancho Santa Fe Polo Club, which had contracted with the newcomers to design a Web page, "but living in California, odd is nothing strange to us."

Not that this particular piece of California would ever be confused with some of its funkier corners. They could easily have taped "Dallas" in Rancho Santa Fe. The main difference between the Beverly Hills of San Diego

and the real thing is space. No overbuilt lots here. Everything is spread out, is dated. The houses are set apart from one another by circles of accouterments, horse arenas giving way to small orchards, small orchards giving way to temis courts and pools, the courts and pools giving way to lush lawns.

At the entrance of the Heaven's Gate house Thursday was a chaotic scere. Satellite trucks, camera crews, reporters, all waiting to interview somebody, anybody. The only people taking for the record were the residents who knew nothing of the dead, but who had plenty to say about the distasteful intrusion they brought to the neighborhood. One woman offered this view from the saddle of her lorse, while a block away the bodies were being packed.

In the end, these 39 people left as they came, as strangers. Nobody here knew them. A waitress at a pancake house a mile away was interviewed nonstop Thursday because, as she put it, "it's been speculated that I may or may not have served them once or twice." This anonymity left a decidedly detached quality to discussion of their demise. The gallows humor flowed early and free!

They were strangers who died strangely, and now they will be boxed up and sent back to wherever they came from. And those who knew them best will search for answers in it all. And how many will begin by saying, everything was fine until theygot to California?

Lessons Still Go Unheeded

Tim Reiterman investigated Peoples Temple for 11/2 years as a San Francisco Examiner reporter, and one of his stories led Rep. Leo Ryan to conduct a fact-finding mission to Jonestown in November 1978. Ryan was shot to death in an airport ambush there, along with three newsmen and a Temple defector. Reiterman was wounded and later wrote a history of the Temple.

t was deja vu: Too many bodies, life snuffed out, arranged neatly in restful repose, showing no obvious signs of violence. In one case, the dead were shielded from the sun by the red-tiled roof of a million-dollar mansion in a wealthy Southern California enclave. In the other, they lay bloated around a tin-roofed pavilion in the jungle of a deeply impoverished South American

. But the death rituals of Peoples Temple and Heaven's Gate—separated by nearly two decades and thousands of miles—will be linked forever.

Although other mass suicides have jolted the world in recent years, the discovery Wednesday afternoon of 39 bodies in Rancho Santa Fe harks back like no other to the worst such event in modern times: the deaths of the Rev. Jim Jones and 912 followers in Guyana.

These distinctly American tragedies underscore the unspeakable carnage that can flow from the surrender of individual wills to the twisted demands of a doomsday cult. And this week's tragedy—like those in the intervening years—demonstrates that the profound lessons of Jonestown have gone unheeded.

"I think people should have learned something from Jonestown—but they haven't learned a damn thing," said Fred Lewis, who lost 27 relatives, including his wife and seven children.

While much about the cyberspace-based cult remains unknown, initial reports indicate there are not only some striking contrasts to Peoples Temple but also similar dynamics that bound the members to the groups for life—and into death.

On the surface, the Heaven's Gate group appeared monastic and reclusive. The members of the sect wore dark clothing, shaved their heads and interacted only minimally with outsiders while building a computer programming business.

But Peoples Temple bordered on becoming a social movement. With thousands of members in California, Jones sought the limelight, winning public appointments, putting his troops on the streets for demonstrations, wooing politicians from the mayor of San Francisco to future First Lady Rosalynn Carter.

. Contrary to widespread belief that cults only attract the ignorant and confused, both organizations appeared to draw a number of highly competent people of various ages and colors. And this enabled them to build successful

create World Wide Web sites for clients on the Internet, Temple members held high-profile positions with the district attorney and the local welfare department, ran homes for the elderly and took in foster children.

The Temple wound up with about \$10 million in assets, most from members who signed over everything they owned. The resources of Heaven's Gate were sufficient for the group to operate in three states and to lease the 10-bedroom estate in Rancho Santa Fe.

Each group spoke to the outside world using the most effective instrument available. The Temple made promotional films and had its own widely distributed newspaper; Heaven's Gate established its own site in cyberspace.

... Using biblical metaphors, the leaders of each of the groups fostered feelings that the members were special-Jones' minions were the Chosen People, Heaven's Gate's were Angels.

And each group believed in life after death. The followers of the computer cult believed that a UFO would whisk them to another place. "The other side," Jones called it.

Both leaders were called "Father." And their followers were subject to controls that went so far as to dictate sexual practices. Heaven's Gate members were required to be celibate; Temple mores were whatever Jones wanted at the time.

Each group harbored a dark side—the concept of mass suicide. In his paranoid rantings, Jones conducted rehearsals in California, and later in Guyana after news media revelations and other pressures forced his retreat to the church's agricultural commune there.

After the Jonestown tragedy, information 🗦 🤄 emerged that many of the victims were murdered. Dozens of adults were forcibly injected or shot, and hundreds of children were killed.

Heaven's Gate at least hinted that members : planned to kill themselves to rendezvous, they believed, with a UFO approaching Earth from behind the Hale-Bopp comet.

Whether government agencies were aware of this is unclear. But Dr. Chris Hatcher, a San Francisco psychologist who has worked with former cult members, said anti-cult groups were not cognizant of the danger.

"There's a misperception that this group was on the radar screen of people who are concerned about violent cults," he said. "They were not."

By contrast, law enforcement agencies and the U.S. State Department were long aware of allegations that Jones had threatened mass suicide but apparently did not take the threat seriously. The Federal Communications Commission, which was monitoring Peoples Temple radio transmissions from Guyana, once even recorded a discussion about a mass suicide rehearsal.

"When is the government going to do something to protect people from this sort of tragedy," said Clare Bouquet of Burlingame, who called on government agencies for help before her son Brian perished in Jonestown.

In the computer-filled Rancho Santa Fe house, the 39 apparently perished from overdoses of sleeping pills, their bodies shrouded in purple triangles of cloth. For the most part, the Jonestown inhabitants died from a purple cyanide-laced fruit punch—not far from a sign:

"Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

Los Angeles Times Los Angeles, CA

Date: Edition:

Friday, 3/28/97

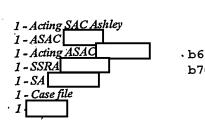
Title:

"Jonestown's Lessons Still Go Unheeded"

Character: Classification:

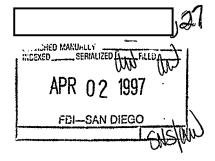
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Cult Targeted Web Sites for Abuse, Depression Victims

■ Internet: It is unknown if such promotion brought recruits. But some say worst potential of cyberspace may have been realized.

By TERENCE MONMANEY and DOUG SMITH TIMES STAFF WRITERS

t may have been by the ghostly light of a computer screen that some of the men and women found dead in the Rancho Santa Fe house-turned-temple first got word of the oft-changing cult now called Heaven's Gate.

The group's extensive use of the Internet—as a bulletin board, publishing medium, outreach device, income source and possibly recruiting tool—added a chilling new element to what will likely be remembered as an epoch-marking tragedy.

Researchers and religious authorities expressed some dismay that the worst potential of cyberspace had perhaps been fulfilled, as people already estranged from traditional society turned to the World Wide Web and found not community but the ultimate alienation.

Among the dozens of interactive computer bulletin boards that Heaven's Gate targeted with links to its own Web site were support groups for abuse victims and people with depression. While it is not clear that those electronic postings were in any way heeded, just the targeting of those groups betrays an intent that some experts find deeply offensive.

"It's really ruthless to exploit people on the basis of their illnesses," said Dr. Louis J. West, a UCLA psychiatrist and noted authority on cult victims. "To go after people with medical problems because you know they're more vulnerable... and pull them into something that could cost them their lives is as bad as you can get."

At the same time, other experts have pointed out that the Internet is simply a distribution system, and is thus no more culpable than the printing press that churned out Hitler's "Mein Kampf." The apparent suicides, said computer columnist Mark Kellner, author of "God on the Internet," "could be the last straw for many who are justifiably bewildered by the Information Age." He suggested that the Net's benefits definitely outweigh its harm, and argued that many lives have been saved by information made available online.

And for all the group's apparent reliance on the Internet, it also depended on traditional media.

A book appearing on the Heaven's Gate Internet site describes how the group began to get out the word about its beliefs in the mid-1970s, long before the World Wide Web or the Internet existed.

The text of its "first poster used for public meetings," dated 1975-76, advertises a lecture on UFOs that would cover such topics as "Why they are here?" "Who they have come for?" and "When

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A15 Los Angeles Times Los Angeles, CA

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"Cult Targeted Web Sites for Abuse, Depression Victims"

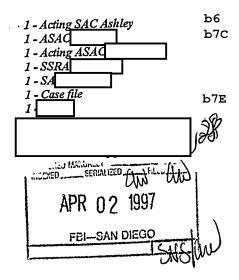
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will they leave?"

The poster, typical of the group's disjointed rhetoric, adds: "Two individuals say they were sent from the level above human, and are about to leave the human level and literally (physically) return to that next evolutionary level in a spacecraft (UFO) within months! "The Two' will discuss how the transition from the human level to the next level is accomplished, and when this may be done."

The poster says the group sponsoring the meeting "is not a religious or philosophical organization

recruiting membership."

More recently, it appears that Heaven's Gate may have used the Web to post advertisements for meetings at which new members were instructed or enrolled. In July 1994 in Madison, Wis., a group referred to as Total Overcomers Anonymous—believed to be an earlier incarnation of Heaven's Gate—drew 30 people to a meeting in a public library, according to the Capital Times newspaper.

That meeting coincides with an Internet calendar of scores of Heaven's Gate meetings that took place in cities nationwide in 1993 and 1994. And the newspaper quoted the onetime watchdog group Cult Awareness Network as saying that Total Overcomers was started 10 years earlier. A pamphlet distributed at the meeting described the group as including "a rejection of everything that one 'knows,' " adding that "a serious change is about to take place . . . and only the converted can move on up."

UCLA's West said "totalist cults" like Heaven's Gate use whatever means available to attract new members. "That the Internet is now being used the way the mails used to be used, or people going door to door on the street, isn't that surprising," he said.

Still, the group's use of targeted electronic communications is unparalleled, if not unprecedented.

One Heaven's Gate key word, "discarnate," links it to numerous home pages devoted to a drug referred to as DMT, which is described as producing experiences of apparent death and visions of nonphysical beings in "hyperspace." The Heaven's Gate text describes new members as "Overcomers," a usage which mixes the group's Internet advertising with that of dozens of Christian "Overcomers" drug recovery programs as well as other Christian counseling groups for survivors of severe trials such as cancer or divorce.

Curiously, the harsh reception by some Internet users of the group's scattershot messaging may have hastened the group's actions.

In September 1995, a Heaven's Gate member named "Jwnody" wrote an article on the Web describing public reaction to one of the group's manifestoes, "Undercover 'Jesus' Surfaces Before Departure." The reaction from Internet users was largely negative.

"The loudest voices were those expressing ridicule," Jwnody wrote. "This was the signal to us to begin our preparations to return 'home.'"



The mansion where the bodies were found apparently was the center of a thriving business designing Web pages for businesses that want a presence on the Internet. One site reportedly produced by the group speaks of reaching the afterlife and UFOs



HALE-BOPP Brings Closure to:



Une keys ac Hedven's Code sinc key Water was the course of the

Hale-Bopp has a "companion" or not is irrelevant from our perspective. However, its spousity very significant to us at "Heaven's Bate." The joy is that our Older Member Boutionary Level Above Human (the "Kingdom of Heaven") has made it clear to us that pp's approach is the "marker" we've been waiting for the time for the arrival of the aftifrom the Level Above Human to take us home to "Their World" — in the literal Quir 22 years of classroom here omplanet Earth is finally coming to conclusion.—
Ition from the Human Evolutionary Level, We are nappily prepared to leave "this world" with Ti's crew

Me fully desire, expect and look forward to boarding a spacecraft from the Next Level very scon (in our physical bodies). There is no doubt in our mind that our being "picked up" is inevitable in the near future . . . ? ? — from Heaven's Gate Web site



Adorned with pictures of stars and nebula, but appears largely a straightforward business site, touting the company's abilities and listing satisfied customers.



Heaven's Gate Web site

The Cult's Philosophy

A voluminous document called "Heaven's Gate: The Door to the Physical Kingdom Level Above Human" was posted on the Internet at http://www.heavensgate.com. Here are some excerpts from the manifesto:

Periodically, the Kingdom Level Above Human sends one of its members 'down' into the human kingdom (to incarnate into a human body) a member who has previously been taken through that evolutionary transition—to offer the knowledge to those who have been 'picked' as possible recipients of that graduation information. This REPRESENTATIVE of THAT NEXT KINGDOM literally takes those candidates through their weaning from the human world—assisting them in the actual separation or breaking of ties to their humanness and helping them graft to Him as the Representative of that Next Level. Their final separation is the willful separation from their human body when they changed enough to identify as the spirit/mind/soul—ready to put on a biological body belonging to the Kingdom of Heaven. (This entering into their 'glorified' or heavenly body takes place aboard a Next Level spacecraft, above the Earth's surface.

Remember, the one who incarnated in Jesus was sent for one purpose only, to say, 'If you want to go to Heaven, I can take you through that gate—it requires everything of you.' Our mission is exactly the same. I am in the same position to today's society as was the One that was in Jesus then. My being here now is actually a continuation of that last task as was promised, to those who were students 2,000 years ago. ***

We will, between now and our departure, do everything we can for those who want to go with us. But we cannot allow them to interfere with or delay our return to Him.

Whether Hale-Bopp has a 'companion' [spacecraft] or not is irrelevant from our perspective. However, its arrival is joyously very significant to us at 'Heaven's Gate.' The joy is that our Older Member in the Evolutionary Level Above Human (the 'Kingdom of Heaven') has made it clear to us that Hale-Bopp's approach is the 'marker' we've been waiting for—the time for the arrival of the spacecraft from the Level Above Human to take us home to 'Their World'—in the literal Heavens.

That window to Heaven will not open again until another civilization is planted and has reached sufficient maturity.

(according to the judgment of the next level)



ALEX GARCIA / Los Angeles Times

THE CULT

Tract Offers Clues About Group's Theology, Motives

By LARRY B. STAMMER, JOHN DART and JAMES RAINEY TIMES STAFF WRITERS

Following a charismatic leader known as "the Representative" and taking their cue from the heavens—Comet Hale-Bopp—the men and women of the Heaven's Gate cult apparently believed they were leaving this week for a spaceship that would take them to a utopian "Next Kingdom."

The complex theology and strident beliefs of 39 cult members, who died in an apparent mass suicide in the San Diego suburb of Rancho Santa Fe, apparently are spelled out in a voluminous tract they left behind. It is titled "Heaven's Gate: The Door to the Physical Kingdom Level Above Human."

Please see BELIEFS, A15



An alien creature was shown on Heaven's Gate Web site.

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

Al Los Angeles Times Los Angeles, CA

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Title:

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Tract Offers Clues on Cul

Continued from A1

. The religious tract and a series of other computer postings on the World Wide Web offered a ready cache of clues to a bizarre event that might otherwise have taken weeks to uncover.

Experts saw in the group's writings a synthesis of ancient and modern religious themes, mixing space-age images with biblical citations in a quest for salvation.

The Heaven's Gate manifesto describes its principal leaders as a man named "Do" or "King Do" and a woman named "Ti," who it said were infused by heavenly spirits more than 20 years ago. That mystical event propelled Do, described as a former college music professor, and Ti, a registered nurse from Houston, on a two-decade odyssey, searching for acolytes on their mission to reach "the Next Level," the text said.

The descriptions of the two leaders also appeared to closely match those of a duo that has been widely criticized for more than a decade by authorities and in several states. Officials say that the pair ruined many lives by manipulating their followers into abandoning reality and all their worldiy possessions.

In a haunting videotape that a surviving group member from Michigan released to a television station Thursday, a follower told why she was prepared to leave Earth for King Do.

"Maybe they're crazy for all I know, but I don't have any choice but to go for it, because I've been on this planet for 31 years and there's nothing here for me," said the woman, who sported closecropped hair and sat next to another woman, who remained silent.

"I don't feel there was any way that anybody could say that I was influenced by somebody's strong personality," the woman added. "The second time I sat with King Do, I felt absolutely [that] ... there was no lie in [him], that there was truth and goodness beyond anything I've ever seen."

On their Web site, Heaven's Gate followers repeatedly invoked Christian imagery and biblical citations to make their case -construing the appearance of their own "Representative" as a sort of Second Coming. But they rejected mainline Christian and Jewish religions as "counterfeits" that had strayed hopelessly from their

original purposes.

In their detached, often rambling New Age jargon, they proclaimed. that they were forsaking worldly wants and were reaching instead for a "Next Level." Non-believers who are left behind will be "plowed under" in a coming apocalypse, they said. One of the group's Internet postings, titled "Our Position Against Suicide," asserted that outsiders commit the equivalent of suicide by turning "against the Next Level when it is being offered."

"That window to Heaven will not open again until another civilization is planted and has reached sufficient maturity (according to the judgment of the Next Level),' the more than 100-page text said.

On their infrequent public forays in recent months, members of the group left a distinct and sometimes unsettling impression. They typically dressed in black pants and shoes and wore their hair shorn close to their heads. Many seemed obsessed with the television series "Star Trek," according to Nick Matzorkis, a Beverly Hills businessman who worked with members of the group for about nine months to establish Web sites.

The group had disavowed all their possessions and meditated frequently. They swore off alcohol, drugs and sex. Some of the men had even been castrated, one of the female members told Matzorkis last fall, he said.

The members of the group had come to view their bodies only as . "containers" or "vehicles" that they would shed once they rendez-

voused with a spaceship.

"I'm surprised how well this 'vehicle' is dealing with it," a former cult member said after he discovered the bodies Wednesday morning, according to Matzorkis, who employs the man in his computer company.

Members of the up said they were flourishing in their isolation from tainted mainstream institutions. They said they felt a philosophical bond with a wide array of fringe people and groups—the Branch Davidians of Waco, the Unabomber, the Order of the Solar Temple, Aum Shinri Kyo of Japan and the Freemen of Montana—whom they believed were also fighting a "corrupt world."

"This is not to say that the Next Level and this Representative would condone many of [the] choices and actions" of those groups, the manifesto said. "However, these groups seem to have correctly identified the 'enemy,' and feel compelled, at varying degrees, to separate from what they believe is a corrupt world."

Experts said Thursday that Heaven's Gate has some parallels in both ancient and modern times.

The Representative's theology bears rough comparison to the ideas of Gnostic sectarians some 17 or 18 centuries ago, said Marvin Meyer, a religion professor at Chapman University in Orange.

Although the modern computergenerated tract does not cite the ancient groups; it too reflects a sense of alienation from mainstream society and presents an

escapist solution.

Gnostics, or "knowers," also wrote of being trapped in a corrupt world, within unwanted bodies. They were denounced as heretics by early Christians. The Representative's theology appears to mix neo-Gnostic ideas with New Age, UFO and apocalyptic speculations—"the sort of things you can pick up just by talking with people on the street," Meyer said.

Carl Raschke, a religious studies professor at the University of Denver and an authority on cults, said: "They wore uniforms.... They see themselves at war with hostile forces.... The kind of black world I'm describing is the real context of people who want to live out a fantasy world of Luke Skywalker versus Darth Vader. They probably see themselves as Luke Skywalker."

The apparent mass suicide seems to have its closest antecedent, in recent times, in the deaths this decade of members of the Solar Temple—in 1994 in Switzerland, in 1995 in the French Alps, and last week in Canada.

Members of the group talked about reaching to a higher plane. Many killed themselves with drug overdoses and left lengthy explanations of their actions with former members. Finally, the timing of the deaths was connected to various celestial events, such as the summer or winter solstice.

The coincidence of the Heaven's Gate deaths with recent celestial and religious events was striking to many observers Thursday. The deaths came just a few days after the spring equinox and a partial lunar eclipse and while the Comet Hale-Bopp is appearing in the northern sky. And Easter, Christianity's celebration of Jesus' resurrection, is just a few days away.

"There are always cults and cult-like behavior surrounding the millennial end times," said Michael Shermer of the Skeptics Society. "People are looking for signs that the end is near, and here we have the comet and a lunar eclipse and the millennium. For these people, there are just too many weird things going on."

Computer lines and radio talk shows have been buzzing for weeks with reports that the comet is accompanied by a companion spacecraft. Pictures of the ship have been distributed on the Internet. The Heaven's Gate group acknowledged the significance of the comet's appearance in one of its online messages.

Whether Hale-Bopp has a 'companion' [spacecraft] or not is irrelevant from our perspective," said the posting on the group's Web site (which was at www://heavensgate.com). "However, its arrival is joyously very significant to us at 'Heaven's Gate.' The joy is that our Older Member in the Evolutionary Level Above Human (the 'Kingdom of Heaven') has made it clear to us that Hale-Bopp's approach is the 'marker' we've been waiting for-the time for the arrival of the spacecraft from the Level Above Human to take us home to 'Their World'-in the literal Heavens."

Such messages went out not only on the group's Web site, but to scores of other newsgroups where Heaven's Gate proselytized for new members. Among the groups that received the messages in the last six months were some designed for Christians, conspiracy buffs, victims of abuse, astrologers atheists, libertarians and members of the militia movement. The Internet has logged tens of thousand of hits on each of those sites.

The Representative promises i: the texts to carry on the work c Christ.

"Remember, the one who incar nated in Jesus was sent for on purpose only, to say, 'If you want t go to Heaven, I can take yo through that gate—it require everything of you.' Our mission exactly the same. I am in the position to today's society as we the One that was in Jesus then."



Apparent members of religious group in videotape that was aired on TV after the mass deaths.

THE INVESTIGATION

Workers' Grim Task Echoes Other Tragedies

By JOHN M. GLIONNA TIMES STAFF WRITER

SAN DIEGO.—The bodies came Thursday in industrial-strength doses, brought to the San Diego County medical examiner's office by the truckload, then carried two by two on a forklift to a waiting semi-truck-turned-cooler, its walls sweating under a warm sun.

On the day after the Rancho Santa Fe mass suicide, investigators began the mammoth task of sorting through 39 bodies, laid side by side and wrapped in white sheets, to confirm the identities of apparent cult members and help piece together the macabre scenario that unfolded inside that hillside Southern California mansion.

Taking a collective breath, veteran San Diego officials insisted that their eight medical examiners and 15 investigators could handle the grisly task ahead—the autopsies, the background work, the notification of families.

All they needed were three mortuary attendants and one coroner's lieutenant from Los Angeles County, along with two \$60,000 "multi-decedent recovery transport vehicles"—each with a 14-body capacity—requested late Wednesday from Los Angeles.

At a county morgue that handles Please see WORKERS, A16 Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

AI Los Angeles Times Los Angeles, CA

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"Workers' Grim Task Echoes Other Tragedies"

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WORKERS: Grim Task Echoes

Other Tragedies

Continued from A1

an average of eight deaths a day, San Diego investigators said they would go about their jobs as always and try to forget about the rows of bodies before them—the 21 women and 18 men—each labeled by number until it could be confirmed whether they were the people named on the driver's licenses and passports found in their pockets.

With more than 50 workers on hand—from doctors and secretaries to lab technicians—officials said not all the staff would focus on the cult member autopsies. Others would handle the "bodies of the day," the crash victims, drive-by casualties and the like.

"We've seen death in this city before, lots of death," said supervising investigator Calvin L. Vine. "We always hope that it happens on somebody else's shift, somebody else's county. But we're ready for this."

Indeed, sun-jeweled San Diego County has endured death on a mass scale before. Nineteen years ago, 128 passengers and a crew of seven aboard a PSA jetliner died in a crash that rained bodies on downtown neighborhoods. In 1984, a 41-year-old unemployed father of two named James Oliver Huberty opened fire at a McDonald's restaurant in suburban San Ysidro, killing 21 adults and children in what was then the worst mass slaying in U.S. history.

Such incidents helped craft battle plans for the latest body count, spelled out in bound manuals and practiced in three-times-a-year drills using colleagues as practice bodies, soiled with fake blood.

But all the logistic plans did not prepare even the veterans for the eerie orderliness of what they found in Rancho Sante Fe.

in Rancho Sante Fe.

"This one was unusual," said investigator George Dickason. "There wasn't the chaos. This one was almost antiseptic."

Many of his colleagues went to school on death.

Many of his colleagues went to school on death. Dickason has a quarter-century in coroner's work. Vine, a 51-year-old Montana native, did two tours in Vietnam as a Navy hospital corpsman.

Late Wednesday, as Vine waited behind the medical examiner's building in Kearny Mesa, 10 miles south of

Contributing to The Times coverage of the deaths in Rancho Santa Fe were staff writers Alan Abrahamson, Nick Anderson, James Bates, Nancy Cleeland; David: Colker, John Dart, Tina Daunt, John Glionna, Matea Gold, Larry Gordon, Leslie Helm, Greg Krikorian, Jeff Leeds, Josh Meyer, Anne-Marie O'Connor, Tony Perry, David Reyes, Nicholas Riccardi, Shari Roan, Lee Romney, Louis Sahagun, Beth Shuster, Doug Smith, Hector Tobar and Jonathan Weber, researcher Nona Yates and correspondents Lynn Simross and Paul Levikow.

the suicide scene, he smoked a cigarette in the dark and said he knew what to expect, "It's gonna be a madhouse," he said, "with the press, the procedures, the calls."

By 10 p.m. Wednesday, his office had begun receiving calls from bewildered parents who hadn't seen their sons or daughters in months or years and feared the worst. Vine took a drag of his cigarette and shook his head.

shook his head.
"We couldn't give them any answers," he said softly. "Other than that we're a major city. And things like this happen."

By Thursday morning, investigators had a bulletin board full of handwritten notes, descriptions of possible cult members given over the phone by mothers and fathers who hoped against hope that a match was not made.

For investigators, answers were slow in coming.
While San Diego Medical Examiner Brian Blackbourne and another doctor arrived at the suicide house

before dusk Wednesday, most passed the time at the office's low-slung headquarters, waiting for San Diego County sheriff's deputies and hazardous materials crews to inspect the scene.

Then, shortly before midnight, Vine and others got

Then, shortly before midnight, Vine and others got the call from the house and made the 20-minute drive north to Rancho Santa. Fe, a wealthy community with eucalyptus-lined, streets where terra cotta-roofed mansions glisten behind protective gates.

At the scene, investigators walked among the bodies that were lying face-up on beds and mattresses throughout the sprawling house, taking notes and being careful not to disturb evidence as scores of deputies and others videotaped the odd spectacle of bodies carefully shrouded, their eyeglasses neatly beside them in spare rooms containing desks with unlit computer screens.

"In this job, you're used to seeing bodies, but not on this scale," said Dickason, who looked for evidence around the mansion. "You just have to be careful to do your job right. I wasn't scared, no more than I would be walking on a downtown street at night. But you're tired, and you want to do things right."

Just before sunrise, the teams began removing bodies. The first truckload arrived at Kearny Mesa at 6 a.m.; followed by two others several hours later.

Each time a truck arrived, the drill was the same.

As television helicopters hovered, workers in red and blue jumpsuits removed bodies on gurneys attached to the inside walls of the vehicle like bunk beds. The bodies were already zipped into vinyl pouches and were covered in white sheets to make carrying them easier. Then they were pulled onto an altar-like forklift bed, it too covered by a white sheet.

arrying bodies two by two, the forklift spun around and delivered its cargo to a waiting refrigerated area where workers—wearing gloves and surgical masks—dragged them inside, lining them side by side in the larger, semi-sized truck, converted for the occasion into a morgue.

While most had witnessed carnage, investigators admitted that they had never seen anything quite like the bodies arranged neatly where death had visited

them, patiently awaiting discovery.

At the San Ysidro McDonald's, investigators saw the bodies of boys, bullets through their chests, their bikes fallen over their feet. After the 1978 airliner disaster, they waded through the body-strewn trail of a plane that hit the ground at 310 miles per hour and destroyed a dozen houses.

This time, investigator Mark Malamatos, wearing a gold cross around his neck, couldn't get over the peacefulness of the death scene. "That's a perfect way to describe it," he said. "They looked peaceful."

Dickason said the bodies usually had identification in shirt or pants pockets, "from various part of the U.S."

"There were IDs on all the bodies I've seen and I've seen a lot," he said. "I didn't see any suicide notes. But their personal effects were in areas that indicated to us that they wanted them to be found."

Shortly after 9 a.m., the final truckload of bodies arrived, also carrying the backpacks and soft suitcases found near several bodies. Workers carried out other possessions, including a pair of high-topped basketball sneakers, the laces tied together.

By afternoon, the chores included taking fingerprints, heights and weights, and searching each body for personal papers or jewelry. Though the deaths appeared to be a carefully orchestrated suicide, "we'll look for external force, the condition of the body and try to pinpoint when they died," Vine said.

But even with expedited toxicology work, it could take weeks to determine the exact cause of death.

For Dickason, the real detective work was only

beginning.

Continuing what would be a 35-hour shift, he planned to return to his cluttered desk and begin working the phones, delivering to unlucky parents the unwanted news of their child's death while trying to elicit information that would help explain the motive behind the mass deaths.

"We've had dozens of calls," he said. "People who haven't seen their kids in a long while are starting to

really worry. This is painful for them."

Other callers were convinced their children were part of the group, but investigators had yet to confirm their suspicions. "We told them to call us back if they hadn't heard from us by sundown," Dickason said.

Back on July 18, 1984—the date of the infamous McDonald's massacre—Dickason was supposed to be taking a day off, but "they called me in to work the phones," he recalled. Others on the San Diego team go even farther back, to Sept. 25, 1978—the day PSA Flight 182 clipped a single-engine Cessna and dropped from the sky on its final approach to Lindbergh Field.

Said Vine: "We've got a contingency plan we've practiced for years for a case just such as this. Now we're getting the chance to put it into action."



Workers use a sling to transport the body of a group member to refrigerated truck for processing.

DANA PARSONS

Going From **Darkness** Into Light

😘 🐃 RANCHO SANTA FE hen dawn crept over the coastal mountain range around 5:30 Thursday, a stranger could finally see where he was. Ah, natural light. And darned if the place didn't turn out to be a little piece of heaven, just like the locals say. Trees, meadows, fruit groves, spectacular vistas from hillside estates.

But make no mistake, a person can get lost here in the dark. "You can make a turn on one of these roads and drive around and be lost all night," one local resident says.

How odd and ironic to be so close to heaven and not see it. How sad to wander in the darkness, waiting for the light.

"Come back and tell us what happened," a young man at the Village Church told a newspaperman Wednesday night who stopped to ask directions to the suicide

By the time they carried the last of the 39 bodies out of the big house on the hill Thursday, a person had plenty of time to think of darkness and light.

What happened, to answer the man's question, was another California "event," the kind that would seem to defy comprehension if it didn't happen so often. Sure, this one was macabre, but we've seen macabre before. Rich kids killing their parents. An ex-football star charged with double murder. Two bank robbers firing away on North Hollywood streets.

So let's call this one macabre with a twist-39 cultists dying not in some grungy no man's land in Guyana or a desolate bunker outside Waco, Texas, but in such a splendid setting that many would call it a place, pardon the expression, to die for.

And, just to take the craziness roaring toward the millennium, this would appear to be the first suicide sect to have its own Web site.

The "event" unfolded like they all do-first, the local media show up, and before you know it, Paris and London are on the phone, not to mention Ted Koppel. By Thursday morning, the Kookens, a family of four from Chicago vacationing nearby, came over to check things out. They somehow got through security and wound up on television.

Yet Gary Kooken didn't come across as a Indicate page, glory hound. We were getting ready to take a drive down to San Diego and we wanted to come over and see what we could A16 see," he said as his daughter stood a few feet Los Angeles Times away, engulfed by interviewers. The family Los Angeles, CA had never been to a major news happening. he said, although "it seems commonplace for California."

Kooken found the media presence unbelievable; one wonders how he would have reacted the night before when, just before 10, a San Diego reporter phoned in her story from the front seat of a red convertible. But the visit to the scene had. its somber side too. "I definitely think about why it happened," he said of the deaths. "I've got a daughter, she's 14, who's not that far behind [in age] of some of them [who died]. I don't understand it."

Nor can most of us understand why people lay themselves down to die.

"It's 39 lost souls. That's how I look at it. I wish there had been a way to reach them before it was too late," said D.R. Martinez, a 17-year veteran with the California Highway Patrol who was among those trying to keep the two-lane road restricted to local residents and the media. "You can't look at something like this and call it another day at the office."

As with most towns suddenly besieged by out-of-town media, the locals rallied 'round. This is, after all, according to a resident, a place where parents send their youngsters to Montessori and then to Country Day School. Many residents live in gated mansions perched on pastoral pedestals. The locals embody "the horsy set, and the golf and tennis set," one man said.

Perhaps that accounts for a certain, detachment that emanated from some of . them. In the morning paper, for example, a local resident noted that the cultists were

One man downtown joked, "The rumor is that they [the dead] were upset that Lauren Bacall didn't win an Oscar." Meanwhile, his co-worker complained about a giant RV taking up space in front of their business. and later lamented that the news helicopters at the death site were "scaring". away the animals, just to get pictures of corpses—like we've never seen them before."

Yes, Rancho Santa Fe is primed to put this quickly behind them. Life does go on, and in few places in as high a style as this one. And as for the cultists, let us hope they find the light they sought.

They died together but, apart from that bond, they surely lived alone in their mansion, cut off in many ways from the outside world. In the end, they proved they had nothing in common with their neighbors-none of whom would be in any hurry to leave their heaven on earth for the real thing.

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"Going From Darkness Into Light"

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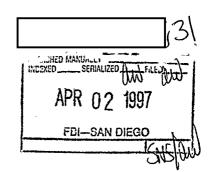
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Group Ran Web Site Business as 'Impeccable Professionals'

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

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"Group Ran Web Site Business as 'Impeccable Professionals'"

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By MICHAEL GRANBERRY and DUKE HELFAND TIMES STAFF WRITERS.

RANCHO SANTA FE—It was only last July that Heather Chronert answered the door of the San Diego Polo Club to find a pair of unexpected visitors: "Gentle, pale people,"—middle-aged men, she recalls, who proposed designing the club's World Wide Web site.

At first skeptical, Chronert, the club's office manager, was soon won over by her visitors' "lavish, impeccable portfolio," which included among its offerings a "beautiful" site that paid homage to a famous rock star and actress:

Madonna.

Based largely on her impression of the Madonna sample, Chronert decided to hire Higher Source Contract Enterprises as the polo club's Internet architects. In exchange for referrals, they were paid only \$1,000, she said, but ended up working "hours and hours and hours."

She described them as "impeccable professionals, some of the best people we've ever worked with, who did nothing but A-plus work. We never had a single problem with them.

"They knew the computer industry backward and forward," she said.

Over the past two years, thousands of design companies have sprung up across the country to service the many companies and nonprofit organizations eager to jump onto the Internet bandwagon with their own Web sites.

A design company can range from a single person with almost no training to an operation with dozens of sophisticated software engineers and graphic artists creating complex sites capable of selling merchandise.

Higher Source—the business end of what officials are now calling the Heaven's Gate cult—was little,

known among the Web design community in San Diego. But the polo club was only one of its clients. Others included a British auto parts dealer and a Hollywood studio, the Kushner-Locke Co., whose most recent movie title offers an eerie epitaph to the now-deceased Web-site creators:

"The Last Time I Committed Suicide."

Competing Internet professionals offered mixed assessments of the group's work. David Bernsen, president of 1Link Internet Services, one of San Diego's largest Web design companies, with 30 employees, said the art produced by Higher Source for the polo club and other clients was well-done, but the technology was unsophisticated.

But Chronert said the common bond among the Higher Source clientele was a willingness to overlook the group's eccentricities for the sake of their craftsmanship.

"They were genuinely very nice people and very talented," said Tom Goodspeed, the polo club's general manager. "But we used to joke in the beginning that they were beamed down from somewhere."

Oddities abounded, Goodspeed said, to the point that he offered to help them "overcome the strangeness of their impression as business people" with the aid of a professional marketing company. But they rejected the idea, saying they were "members of a monastery."

Chronert also found herself puzzled by the group's "peculiar" requests. She never knew the last name of a single member of Higher Source, she said, calling her primary contact a man in his 40s named "Stewart."

Two weeks ago, he offered what sounded like parting words.

"He said, 'Don't bother calling me until after Easter, because I won't be available. I'll be involved in some monastery activities,' "she remembered him saying.

During one visit, she gave Stewart a polo cap. Showing the group's tendency toward uniformity, (A)

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Stewart requested matching headgear for 12 colleagues. When members of the group attended a polo match last summer, they were wearing their polo caps and, Chronert said, matching each other from head to toe.

Goodspeed said the group all wore "buzz cuts and dark clothes" and "looked like they were spun out of a mold."

The Web site that got them hired at the club is not endorsed by Madonna, her publicist said Thursday.

Liz Rosenberg said "there are numerous Madonna Web sites," such as that designed by Higher Source, which is found on the Internet at http://www.primadonna.com. Only those designed by her record company bear the "official" label, Rosenberg said.

Los Angeles businessman Nick Matzorkis, who enlisted Higher Source to design Web sites for his company, Interactive Entertainment Group, said the group was referred by movie producer Peter Locke.

Matzorkis liked Higher Source, he said, for producing superior work at a low cost and for being "professional, courteous and worldly." He also remembered them as being "'Star Trek' junkies."

Officials at British Masters, an auto parts dealer in Vista, declined comment on Higher Source, which designed their Web site.

A man identified only as Eric said he would be willing to discuss Higher Source "for 15 minutes at 4 p.m. for \$1,000."

But Marvin Caldwell, a San Diego-area real estate agent, said he had known the members of Higher Source for about six months, having met them at an estate sale.

He identified the person he dealt with primarily as Brother Logan, who told Caldwell he came from the Midwest and used to work for a Fortune 500 company.

Brother Logan told him, Caldwell said, that the group supported itself through its Web site work and had designed a site for the movie "Pinocchio." The film's producers could not be reached for comment Thursday.

39 'containers'

at Heaven's

Gate

By Gale Holland, Jonathan T. Lovitt and Richard Price USA TODAY

RANCHO SANTA FE, Calif.

— The preparations were meticulous, the departures orderly. "Immaculately executed," is how San Diego County Medical Examiner Brian Blackbourne put it.

They bid farewell on videotape. They packed suitcases. They slipped their driver's licenses and passports in their shirt pockets along with \$5 bills and a few quarters.

Then they mixed the recipe written on little slips of paper — applesauce or pudding loaded with phenobarbital — and washed it down with vodka.

Finally, they pulled plastic trash bags over their heads and lay back to die.

Not a drop of blood was spilled, but the police description Thursday of the peaceful decision with which 39 people took their lives in their rented \$1.6 million mansion here was more chilling in some respects than a massacre.

At a distance, they seemed like people who had everything to live for. They ran a successful business called Higher Source, designing Web sites and worked out of an estate on a glorious hillside in a southern California paradise. Townspeople who had met them said they were likable and intelligent, sober and clean-living.

But something lured them away from life, and authorities were at a loss to explain exactly how. "We may never really know the question that's on everybody's minds, which is: Why did they do this?" Sheriff Bill Kolender said at a news conference at the county fairgrounds.

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

4A USA Today Arlington, VA

Date: Edition:

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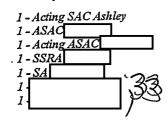
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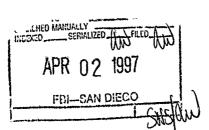
"39 'containers' at Heaven's Gate"

Character: or Classification:

Submitting Office

San Diego Indexing:







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But as police gradually pieced together evidence found at the scene with information furnished by witnesses acquainted with the group, they concluded that the dead all belonged to a cult known as Heaven's Gate. It believes that human beings evolve from one level to the next and that their bodies simply are "containers" or "vehicles" that carry an

eternal spirit.

According to their Web site, they believed that the comet Hale-Bopp was a "marker ... for the arrival of the spacecraft from the Level Above Human to take us home." In recent weeks, the cult issued invitations over the Internet for others to join in an impending journey. "Find your boarding pass to leave with us during this brief window," tthey wrote on the web site.

So 39 took the journey. Actually, the group numbered 40, but one of them wasn't there for reasons that aren't yet clear. Robert Zakari, a Beverly Hills businessman who runs an entertainment and search company, said the missing man

works for him.

Identifying him only as "Rio," Zakari says the group sent Rio two videotapes. One featuerd an address by the leader. On the other, 38 of the 39 dead said good-bye and explained why they were going.

Members believed it was time to "exit their vehicles,"

Zakari said.

The videotapes arrived by mail Tuesday evening. The group members instructed Rio to tell people about the mission. "They knew what kind of brouhaha this was going to cause," Zakari said.

Rio discussed the tapes then with Nick Matsorkis, Zakari' partner, on Wednesday. Then the two of them drove to the Rancho Santa Fe mansion and Rio walked in to discover the bodies. They called police im-

mediately, he said.

Police Thursday said only that they had received an

anonymous call.

When authorities arrived, they found a mixed group - 21 women and 18 men. Most were from the Southwest - Utah, New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, Colorado and California. Others came from Minnesota, Ohio, Washington and Canada. Two drivers' licenses showed the same address.

Individuality was not a valued quality. All had close-

cropped hair. All were dressed in black - long-sleeved black shirts worn outside black trousers. All wore new black sneakers, mostly Nikes.

When police found them, all lay on their sides or backs scattered throughout the two-story, seven-bedroom house.

They died in shifts. Blackbourne estimated there were at least three groups who died over the course of about three days. After each group succumbed, their comrades apparently cleaned up. They removed the black bags and put them in the trash. Then they covered each body in a purple shroud measuring about three

feet square folded in half to

make a triangle.

Two bodies were found with the bags still over their heads and the purple shrouds covering them. Blackbourne theorized they were the last to go.

Realtor Marvin Caldwell believes he may have met the leader last September when he visited a gargage sale held by the group. He was escorted around by a man in his 50s or 60s, Cadwell said, who went by the name, Brother Logan.

Caldwell described him as "very intelligent but in a state of delusion. He was seriously deranged as...though he was a member of a group from another planet."

According to Logan's account, Caldwell said, the group had lived outdoors in rough conditions for periods as long as several years and had spent considerable time in Arixona and New Mexico. Part of their

mission was to recruit addicts and help them recover.

A drawing of ET sat above the mantle in the living room, Caldwell said. A caption beneath it read, "A member of the next level."

Everyone wore buzz cuts, he said, and tended to dress in similar fashion — jeans and long shirts. A few were in wheelchairs. All referred to their home as "the ship," and Brother Logan made constant references to going "somewhere else."

Cheryl Hansen, co-owner of Gig@Bites, an Internet cafe, said a few group members came in from time to time. They'd play computer games and surf the net. She recalled a family, a couple with four kids. Again, all wore black. Otherwise, she said, "They just seemed like normal people."

"We may never really know the question that's on everybody's minds, which is: Why did they do this?"

 Sheriff Bill Kolender said at a news conference at the county fairgrounds

Deadly mix of alcohol, depressants

By Jane E. Allen
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A group of technically savvy computer programmers apparently committed mass suicide this week by using a classic mixture of alcohol and depressants that shuts down breathing, leading to a quiet death.

Preliminary toxicology tests on some of the 39 cult members whose bodies were recovered from a mansion in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif., indicate that they ingested combinations of phenobarbital and alcohol.

The cult members left behind a recipe for death that called for washing the drug down with vodka.

The cult members used an inexpensive method that relied on a particularly long-acting, rarely abused drug, said Dr. Greg Thompson of the University of Southern California Schools of Pharmacy and Medicine.

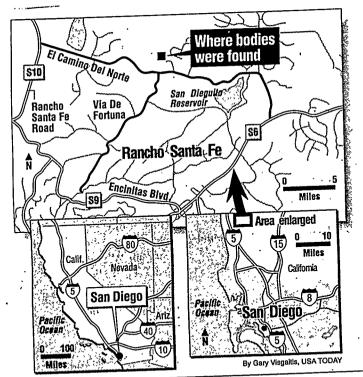
Phenobarbital is an antiseizure medicine that turns deadly in sufficient quantities. Its effects are intensified with alcohol.

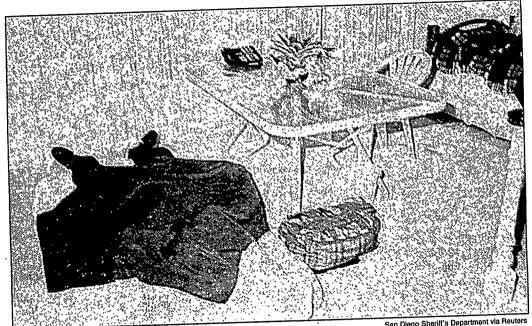
Thompson estimated that 50 or 60 pills could be fatal "but mixed with alcohol, fewer pills would probably be necessary."

Unlike some popular depressants that act in half an hour, phenobarbital takes four to six hours to begin working and stays in the system 24 to 48 hours.

Initially, the vodka-drug combination would slow down a person's system and put him to sleep, Thompson said.

Over the next few hours, he said, "phenobarbital will depress your respiration to the point where you're not breathing and then your heart stops."





Covered with purple shroud: The bodies of 21 women and 18 men, all with closely cropped hair and wearing identical black outfits, were found at the Heaven's Gate cult's mansion in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif.

THE VICTIMS

The dead include:

▶ 21 women, ages 28 to 72

▶ 18 men, ages 29 to 66 ▶ Two blacks, the others white, possibly some Hispanics

► Most in their 40s

► One with a Canadian birth certificate, the rest had U.S. birth certificates or U.S. passports

▶ 10 people with New Mexico driver's li-

▶ 9 with Texas driver's licenses

▶ 4 with Colorado driver's licenses

▶ 4 with California driver's licenses ▶ 3 with Arizona driver's licenses

▶ 3 with a Utah driver's license

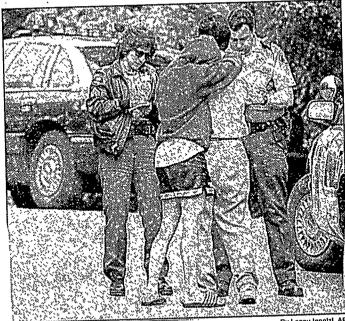
▶ 1 with a Washington driver's license ▶ 1 with a Florida driver's license

▶ 1 with an Ohio driver's license

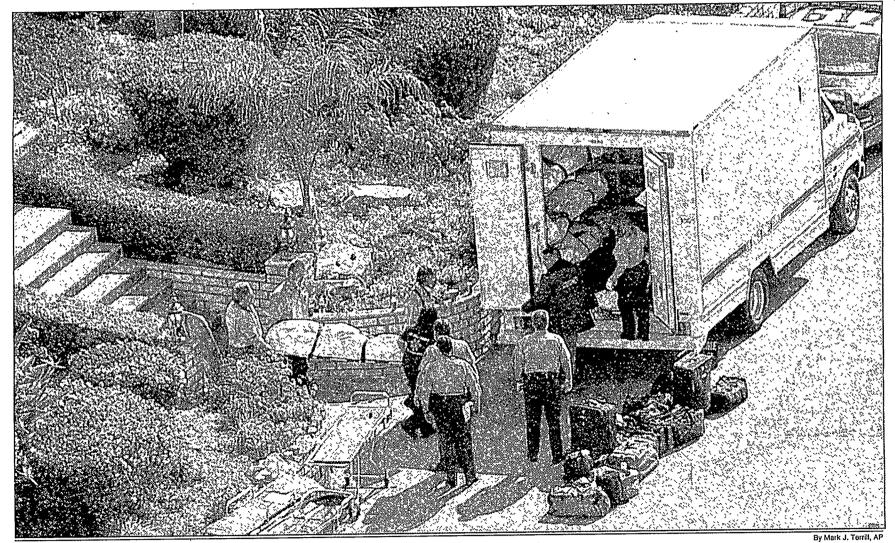
▶ 1 with a Minnesota driver's license ▶ 1 with international driver's license

▶ 1 with no driver's license

Source: San Diego County Sheriff Bill Kolender, county Medical Examiner Dr. Brian Blackbourne



Landlord: The mansion's owner, Sam Koutchesfahani, gets a hug from a friend while talking to police about getting onto his property. Police say the 39 members of a high-tech cult killed themselves in shifts, consuming drugs and vodka, after packing their bags in anticipation of a rendezvous with a spacecraft trailing the Hale-Bopp comet.



Scene of apparent suicides: San Diego and Los Angeles County medical examiner personnel transport victims to the morgue Thursday in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif.

Cults are radical but nothing new in American history

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"Cults are radical but nothing new in American history"

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Cults are in the news again, but what exactly are they, how do they work, why do Americans continue to fill their ranks? USA TODAY's Richard Willing queried three people who have studied cults from different perspectives: Fred Clothy, chairman of the department of religious studies at the University of Pittsburgh; William Stuart, anthropology professor at the University of Maryland, and David E. Van Zandt, dean of the Northwestern University Law School. This Q and A reflects interviews with all three.

O: What's a "cult"?

A: A new or radical religious movement outside the mainstream of thought and practice. Cults often organize around a strong central personality and emphasize community. They are often self-sufficient and cut off by choice from society, either physically, socially or both.

O: Who are their leaders?

A: Men, women, occasionally children, sometimes small committees. They have this in common: charisma and the ability to communicate.

Q: How many cults are there?

A: No one really knows. Estimates range from around 2,000 to up to 10,000, and that's just for cults founded in America since the 1960s.

Q: Are cults new then?

A: Hardly. America was founded in part by Puritans, Anabaptists, Pilgrims, Quakers and other religious dissenters considered cultike by some contemporaries. In the 19th century, millenarian cultists donned white robes and waited on hillsides to be raised up to heaven.

O: Do modern cults differ from their ancestors?

A: Seemingly. Since the 1960s, cults have grown in number and variety. Traditional fundamentalist Indexing: Christian cults still flourish, but they've been joined by "New Age" cults, cults with their origins in Asian, African and South American beliefs, nature cults, Druids, witches and now, apparently, cyberspace cults.

O: Why the popularity now?

A: The American desire for religious experience séems as strong as ever. But Americans may be less wedded to the practice of a single formal religion, and more willing to look at alternative views. And then there is what Clothy calls the "loss of the sense of rootedness."

Q: Who joins? A: All sorts. Several studies have

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been commissioned to find the profile of a typical cult member. About the best they've come up with is that cult members are "seekers" who want to be active religiously but don't have a strong theology or church.

Q: Do members ever drop out?
A. All the time. The average cult member lasts a year.

Q: What do cults think of each other?

A: Often, not much. "You haven't seen a standoff until you've seen a Christian (cultist) argue with a Wikan (witchcraft enthusiast)," says Maryland's Stuart. And "cult" itself is a dirty word. "Cult is what you call the ones you don't like," Stuart says.

Q: The Rancho Santa Fe group believed in UFOs. Is this a new wrinkle? A: From a cult standpoint, UFOs are old hat. In the early 1960s, psychologist Leon Festinger studied a cult whose members believed they were destined to be snatched up and delivered to life beyond earth by a fleet of aliens. They were stood up, but Festinger was fascinated. They were so committed to their beliefs, he found, that the failure of the aliens to materialize hardly fazed them.

Q: What about ritual suicide?

A: That is something new. It's relatively rare, and all the more memorable because of "cultlike" rituals — purple cowls at Rancho Santa Fe, "sacramental" Kool-Aid at Jonestown, the deciphering of cryptic messages at David Koresh's Waco compound in Texas.

Q: Is it safe to assume that suicide committers are "brainwashed" or otherwise led to their deaths by a cult's leaders?

A: We'd certainly like to think that. "It's tough on parents when kids even get involved in cults," says Northwestern's Van Zandt. "Parents want to believe that the only thing that possibly could have happened was that their kid got brainwashed.

"In reality, suicide can be a logical next step, depending on a cult's belief in the afterlife."

Q: Have any cults crossed over and become mainstream?

A: In American history, Mormons were viewed as a cult and even persecuted in the 19th century. But they hung on, prospered and eventually moderated some of their more exotic practices, such as polygamy. "It's been said that a cult is just a religion that hasn't got a university or a football team yet," says Stuart. "That's not far from it."

Death shifts used drugs, plastic bags

By Gale Holland USA TODAY

RANCHO SANTA FE, Calif. - The 39 members of the Heaven's Gate cult, believing their deaths would bring them passage aboard a UFO trailing the Hale-Bopp Comet, killed themselves with a cocktail of vodka and tranquilizers, authorities said Thursday.

The group, which designed World Wide Web pages, was high-tech to the end, leaving behind farewell videos.

"Hale-Bopp's approach is the 'marker' we've been waiting for," said the group's statement on its Web site. "We are happily prepared to leave 'this world.'"

The cult apparently committed suicide in groups: 15 the first day, 15 the second and the remaining nine the third day, each person with a plastic bag over their head.

Each group cleaned up after the previous one. The last two people alive removed plastic bags, then killed themselves.

The group's leader, a former psychiatric patient named Marshall Applewhite, is presumed to be one of the dead.

A sheriff's video of the \$1.6 million rented death house showed bodies shrouded in purple on metal bunkbeds and cots, suitcases at their feet.

All were clutching \$5 bills and coins in their hands.

"It seemed to be a group decision," said San Diego County Medical Examiner Brian Blackbourne. "It was very planned, sort of immaculately carried out."

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Police won't identify the victims until families are notified.

The group included 21 women and 18 men from nine states, ranging in age from 28 to 72. The 72-year-old woman with swollen ankles lay near her wheelchair.

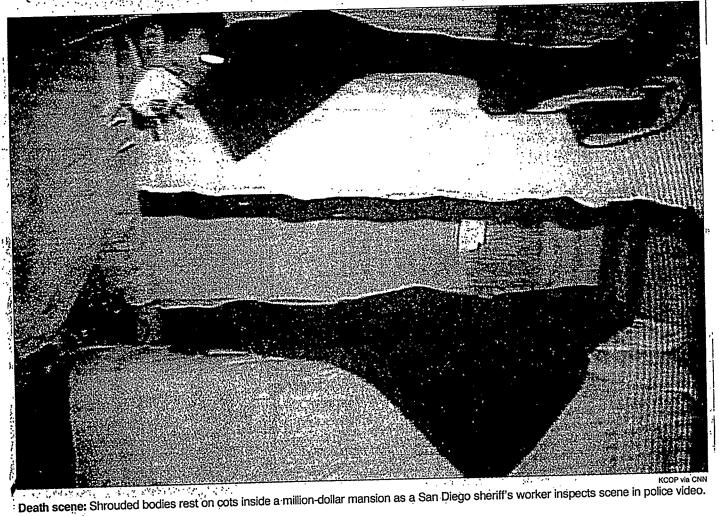
Deputies originally misidentified them as men because of their close-cropped hair and uniform clothing: black pants, shirts and Nike athletic shoes.

One 66-year-old man, thought to be Applewhite, died alone in the master bedroom, Fulmer said. The others died in groups of five per room.

The suicide recipe was found with each body: Take pudding or applesauce and mix it with phenobarbital, drink it down with alcohol, lie back and relax.

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Cult awaited comet, UFO



Cult members said they had life's answers

Sect, co-founded by mental patient, has had branches in at least 7 states

By Tom Squitieri USA TODAY

The 39 men and women of the religious cult who committed suicide Wednesday preached cosmic enlightenment and claimed they had the answers to such weighty metaphysical questions as who put humans on earth and why.

The cult was founded in the early 1970s by Marshall Herff Applewhite, a patient in a Houston mental hospital, and Bonnie Lu Nettles, his nurse. The cult averaged between 40 and 200 members as its disciples crisscrossed western and midwestern USA in search of members.

At times cultists called their group Total Overcomers Anonymous and the Next Level Crew. On their Web page, cultists refer to themselves as "Us at Heaven's Gate."

The cult's money-making operation, in which they earned money by designing computer Web pages for businesses, is called the Higher Source.

The cult had branches in Arizona, Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Texas and Washington state.

In the 1970s, it maintained a headquarters in San Francisco.

Cult members are thought to still have a summer compound in the Rocky Mountains and a winter compound in Texas.

"We are, in fact, the cult of cults," said cultist "Millie" during a April 9, 1994, recruiting meeting in Alabama.

"We are being brainwashed and would like nothing more to be brainwashed, to have our minds cleansed," she said, according to notes taken by members of Watchman Fellowship, an organization of cult watchers, who attended the session

ers, who attended the session.

The Heaven's Gate Web site lists its mailing address as TE-LAH Services and a box at a PostNet store in northeast Phoenix, Ariz.

The store owner said Thursday that he did not know the group or individual who was renting the box.

Last May, a Logan Lahson applied for a business license



Applewhite: Cult leader identified in video, networks said.

for TELAH with the city of Phoenix, city workers said. The address he listed on the application is a large apartment complex near the PostNet. A telephone number he listed was answered by a machine. Cult members claim the end

Cult members claim the end is rapidly approaching. Only by abandoning all personal possessions and following the teachings of Applewhite and Nettles can people move into the next world.

The cult warned that "Luciferians," person not believing in UFOs and space aliens, will be "recycled" or killed when current civilization is "spaded" through natural disaster.

Cultists thought their prophecy of "spading" was about to come true in January 1994.

Three days before the Jan, 17, 1994, earthquake in Los Angeles, cultists were handing out flyers in Santa Monica announcing that the Earth's "present civilization is about to be recycled — spade under — in order that the planet might be refurbished."

Just hours after the earthquake struck, cultists were out with new flyers boasting: "We told you so."

By the mid-1970s, Applewhite and Nettles changed their names to Bo and Peep, claiming their earthly names were irrelevant. They began to preach they had been sent from the "level beyond" to inhabit the host bodies in order Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

5A USA Today Arlington, VA

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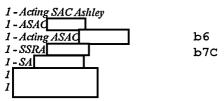
"Cult members said they had life's answers"

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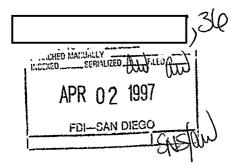
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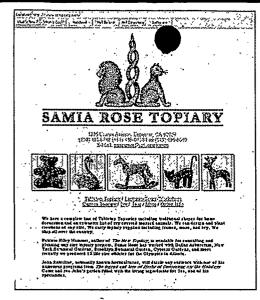
San Diego Indexing:





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Business venture: Members of Higher Source made money by designing World Wide Web sites for clients who weren't otherwise linked to the cult, such as the San Diego Polo Club.

Web jargon relatively simple to learn

The cult suicide of the Heaven's Gate group of computer programmers is focusing new attention on the World Wide Web, the part of the Internet where users can see information displayed in magazine-style "pages."

Some pages have sounds and even snippets of video or animation.

Web pages are viewable using software called a "browser." One way to get to a page is to open the browser and type in the address —

for example, http://www. heavensgate.com

That page is the cult's "home page." Many home pages have links to other related pages, creating a global "web" of information.

The programming language used to create Web pages is relatively simple to learn, and many software programs are now available that automate the process.

"It's a great leveler. If you've got good graphics you look the same as AT&T," said John Knapp, executive difrector of trancenet.org of Burke, N.Y., which tracks cults on its own Web site, http://www.trancenet.org

The Heaven's Gate cult ran a Web design company, Higher Source, which created Web pages for small businesses.

That site can be found at http://www7.concentric.net/~Font)

By Leslie Miller,

to spread the message.

They also claimed to be the two "witnesses" mentioned in the Book of Revelations who would eventually ascend to heaven in a cloud — interpreted by the group to be a UFO.

Later the pair changed their names again to Do and Ti. In 1985 Ti (Nettles) died. Do is believed to have died Wednesday in the mass suicide.

Under the name of Do, Applewhite was featured in a 25-minute video cultists showed during recruiting stops.

"When you mix an apocalyptic view with pyschologicial drugs, you have a deadly mixture," said Nancy O'Meara of the Cult Awareness Network.

"This is not a broad cult they have. No one else thinks this way," she said.

The group also preached complete abstinence from sex, drugs' and alcohol. The latter two prohibitions were breached for the suicide: cult members systematically killed themselves with drugs and vodka, police said.

Higher Source, which designed Web sites for small businesses, promoted itself as a company with "a high degree

of skill and know-how through personal discipline and concerted effort. We try to stay positive in every circumstance and put the good of a project above any personal concerns or artistic egos."

Clients of Higher Source told USA TODAY the cult's computer experts were polite, businesslike and inexpensive.

Higher Source staffers used first names only. Most were in their 40s or older. They dressed in jeans, T-shirts and tennis shoes. And they let their clients know they would be unavailable the two weeks before Easter.

Danielle Forlano, a spokesperson for InterAct Entertainment in Beverly Hills, described the Higher Source employees as relatively normal, aside from an androgynous style of dress.

After working with Higher Source, InterAct ended up hiring a cult member looking to leave the group.

Higher Source's "Stewart" left a message with Heather Chronert, office manager of the San Diego Polo Club, saying "they would be involved with monastery activities until

after Easter" and were unavailable until then.

The club hired them to design a web site of polo match schedules, club information and tidbits about the game.

David Sams, a partner with the Los Angeles production and marketing company TVFirst, wanted a web page to sell their gospel music compilation, "Keep the Faith."

Of a dozen bids last summer, Higher Source was the lowest at \$14,000.

Sams also got a message from Higher Source technicians two weeks ago. "They said they were going on a retreat.

But they gave us a beeper number we could use if we had problems. And in fact we did and beeped them. They called back, apologized for us having a problem and said they were sorry they were out of town."

No one mentioned a religious affiliation. "They never said they were going to the mother ship or anything," Sams said.

Contributing: Tom Curley, Linda Kanamine and Maria Puente.

WEB SITE DETAILS 'PURPOSE HERE ON EARTH'

The Higher Source cult recruited members through ads and a World Wide Web site called Heaven's Gate. They also had a site called Higher Source to sell their Web site design business. Excerpts from those sources on what the cult said about itself:

From an ad in USA TODAY, May 27, 1993:

► The Earth's present "civilization" is about to be recycled — "spaded under." Its inhabitants are refusing to evolve. The weeds have taken over the garden and disturbed its usefulness bevond repair.

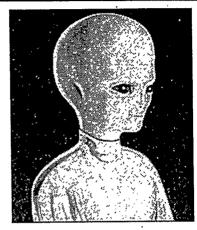
► The True Kingdom of God, the "headquarters" of all that is, is a manymembered Kingdom which physicaly exists in the highest, most distant heaven — a non-temporal place (outside of time, and with eternal life.)

▶ The reason the term "True" Kingdom of God is used repeatedly is because there are many space alien races that through the centuries of this civilization have represented themselves as "Gods." We refer to them collectively as "Luciferians," for their ancestors fell away from the True Kingdom of God many thousands of vears ago.

▶ These Luciferian space races are the humans' greatest enemy. They hold humans in unknown slavery ... They even try to make deals with huan governments to permit them (the Luciferians) to engage in biological experimentation (through abductions) in exchange for technically advanced modes of travel - though they seldom follow through.

▶ The True Kingdom of God's design permits the presence of a "Luciferian" element ... Without it, we would have no choices — our free will could not be exercised.

▶ Humans were, from the beginning, given a "prime directive" not to kill other humans. "In defense" or for "rightness" are no exceptions. Righ-



Heaven's Gate: Cult's depiction of a Kingdom of Heaven member

teousness is what most frequently causes conflict.

▶ The following was in a small box at the end of the ad.

CAUTION: If the above information is consumed or assimilated, you may experience such side effects as loss of marriage, family, firends, career, respectability and credibility. Continued use could even result in the loss of your membership in the human kingdom.

From the Higher Source Web site:

▶ The individuals at the core of our group have worked closely together for over 20 years. We try to stay positive in every circumstance and put the good of a project above any personal concerns or artistic egos. By sustaining this attitude and conduct, we have achieved a high level of efficiency and quality in our work.

From Heaven's Gate Web site:

► The joy is that our Older Member in the Evolutionary Level above human (the Kingdom of Heaven) has made it clear to us that Hale-Bopp's anproach is the 'marker' we've been waiting for. ... Our 22 years of classroom here on planet Earth is finally coming to conclusion - 'graduation' from the Human Evolutionary Level. We are happily prepared to leave 'this

▶ If you study the material on this website you will hopefully understand our joy and what our purpose here on Earth has been. You may even find your "boarding pass" to leave with us during this brief 'window.'

▶ "Two thousand years ago . . . upon instruction, a member of the Kingdom of Heaven then left behind His body in that Next Level ... and moved into (or incarnated into) an adult human body (or 'vehicle') that had been 'prepped' for this particular task. The body that was chosen was called Jesus. ... Remember, the One who was incarnated in Jesus was sent for one purpose only, to say, 'If you want to go to Heaven, I can take you through that gate - it requires everything of you.'

▶ "We fully desire, expect and look forward to boarding a spacecraft from the Next Level very soon (in our physical bodies).

There is no doubt in our mind that our being 'picked up' is inevitable in the very near future.

It could happen that before that spacecraft comes, one or more of us could lose our physical vehicles (bodies) due to 'recall,' accident or at the hands of some irate individual.

▶ Unless you are currently an active student or are attempting to become a student of the present Representative from the Kingdom of Heaven - you ARE STILL 'of the world,' having no significant separation from worldliness, and you are still serving the opposition to the Kingdom of Heaven.

. We will, between now and our departure, do everything we can for those who want to go with us. But we cannot allow them to interfere with or delay

our return to Him.

Comets invite tales of doom and mystery

By Paul Hoversten USA TODAY

Since ancient times, comets like Hale-Bopp have been seen as celestial signs that could portend either good luck or doom.

Kingdoms fell, rulers died and wars broke out when these icy objects with their blazing tails would mysteriously appear in the heavens. The word "disaster" itself comes from Latin for "bad star."

As the last comet of this century and one that astronomers rank as a Great Comet for its brightness, Hale-Bopp holds a special appeal for end-of-the-millennium groups, some of whom believe it presages the end of the world.

Some of the more imaginative postings on the Internet link the comet's visit with everything from the coming of the Messiah to extraterrestrials arriving on Farth

arriving on Earth.

The 39 members of the Heaven's Gate group near San Diego who apparently took their own lives became convinced that a UFO was traveling behind Hale-Bopp. And they thought that it would take them from Earth.

"Hale-Bopp's approach is the 'marker' we've been waiting for," reads part of a passage from the group's Internet site. "We fully desire, expect and look forward to boarding a spacecraft from the Next Level very soon."

For months, astronomer Alan Hale has debunked wide-spread reports that an alien spaceship was trailing the comet he co-discovered in July 1995. For his denunciations of the spaceship theory, he has "been called a traitor to the Earth" by those who believe it, Hale says.

He plans to discuss the mass suicide in a press conference today in Cloudcroft, N.M.

The Heaven's Gate site made no mention of the coming millennium, but trend spotier Gerald Celente predicts that similarly bizarre behavior will only increase as the turn of the new century approaches. He says people may use this "millennium fever" as an excuse for more mass suicides and irrationality.

"We're going to see a rash of very, very severe acts taking place and people doing things that they ordinarily wouldn't do as we get close to the millennium," says Celente, founder and director of Trends Research Institute in Rhinebeck, N.Y., and author of the new book *Trends 2000*.

"They may not mention the millennium," adds Celente, "but what we're saying is, be prepared for a lot more."

In researching his book, Celente looked back to the last millennium, the years 1000-1001 A.D., and "we found out people were also doing yery irrational things."

The past week has been a banner one for sky-gazers and anyone with superstitions:

► Hale-Bopp continues to grow brighter in the northwest sky at night for viewers in the Northern Hemisphere.

Last Thursday was the spring equinox, one of two times each year when the sun crosses Earth's equator and day and night are of equal length. The equinox was especially revered by the Celtic Druids, who favored human sacrifice in some rituals.

Last Saturday, Hale-Bopp passed closest to Earth at 122 million miles. Its closest sweep by the sun, 85 million miles, comes April 1.

► Last Sunday — Palm Sunday — the moon went into a dramatic partial eclipse, and the planet Mars was visible just to the right of it. The West Coast view of Hale-Bopp was especially good because it came during the eclipse.

"Anybody could use any of that to come up with a correlation that we have to do something," says Wilgus Burton, director of The Science Place Planetarium in Dallas.

The Heaven's Gate deaths aren't the first linked to a comet's appearance.

Astronomers at the turn of the century had detected traces of poisonous cyanide in the tail of Halley's comet. In April 1910, with Earth on a course to pass through the comet's orbit, people began to kill themselves.

A week before its closest approach, at least eight people committed suicide by jumping from the tops of buildings and bridges.

Contributing: Patrick O'Driscoll and Robert Moore Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

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"Comets invite tales of doom and mystery"

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Astral Cult, Expecting UFO Rendezvous, newspaper, city, state Systematically Took Their Own Lives

By SCOTT LINDLAW Associated Press Writer

RANCHO SANTA FE - Thirtynine members of a cult of computer programmers systematically killed themselves with drugs and vodka after packing their bags for what they thought was a rendezvous with a UFO trailing the Hale-Bopp comet. It seemed to be a group deci-

sion," Dr. Brian Blackbourne, the San Diego County medical examiner, said Thursday. "It was very planned, sort of immaculately carried out."

The victims included 21 women and 18 men, all with closely cropped hair and wearing identical black outfits. Police said the hair and the fact that decomposition had set in - had made their gender and age difficult to determine at first.

Most were found with little pieces of paper containing a suicide recipe: take pudding or applesauce and mix it with phenobarbital, drink it down with alcohol, lie back and relax.

The victims apparently committed suicide in separate groups: 15 the first day, 15 the second and the remaining nine the third day, each with a plastic bag over their head to hasten the deaths, Blackbourne said.

The deaths came days after the group updated their "Heaven's Gate" Web site on the Internet with a statement saying the comet's appearance meant their time had come.

"Hale-Bopp's approach is the 'marker' we've been waiting for," says the statement on the World Wide Web site. "We are happily prepared to leave 'this world."

The group also mailed out videos in which a bald man in black appears to beckon followers to leave Earth and a woman with nothing to live for says farewell. The videos went to a minister in Toledo, Ohio and to a former cult member in Los Angeles, and excerpts were aired by CBS and ABC on Thursday.

The Federal Express package received by the former cult member, who tipped police to the mass suicide, came with a letter warning that the group would have committed suicide by the time the package arrived.

"By the time you read this, we suspect that the human bodies we were wearing have been found, and that a flurry of fragmented reports have begun to hit the wire services," it said.

"We'll be gone — several dozen of us. We came from the Level Above Human in distant space and we have now exited the bodies that we were wearing for our earthly task, to return to the world from whence we came - task completed," the letter said.

One video had an ethereal look with triple images of a bald, elderly man in a black, collar-less shirt on a white plastic patio chair. The other showed a woman with short Indicate page,

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cropped hair saying farewell, seated next to a pager man with a buzz haircut, sat stiffly and occasionally fidgeted.

"Maybe they're crazy for all I know but I don't have any choice but to go for it because I've been on this planet for 31 years and there's nothing here for me," the woman said. "They meticulously hylening deaths were described at an extraordinary news conference. Thursday, held at the county fairgrounds to accommodate the crush of media. Authorities even released a video showing the bodies inside the hilltop mansion where cult members had lived for months.

Blackbourne said the second group cleaned up after the first, the third after the second. The last two alive removed plastic bags from the last seven bodies and then killed themselves.

"We believe they were the last ones and they did have plastic bags over their heads," Blackbourne said.

The dead ranged in age from 20 to 72, and because each had closely cropped hair, it was difficult initially to determine their sex. Most had identification packets in their shirt pockets.

One victim was Canadian, two were black, a few were Hispanic and the rest were white, he said. Authorities withheld IDs until family members were notified....

Each victim had a packed suitcase at the foot of their bed or cot, and each had a \$5 bills and quarters in their pockets, Blackbourne said.

Police showed a videotape taken from inside the mansion showing bodies all dressed in black — identical Nike running shoes, long-sleeve shirts and pants — lying on neatly made bunk beds.

"It appeared as if it were almost a uniform attire," said Sheriff's Cmdr. Alan Fulmer.

All had purple shrouds covering their upper bodies, and some had eyeglasses folded carefully at their sides. Computer equipment filled the nine-bedroom house.

A Beverly Hills businessman who hired the former cult member who received the videos said Thursday that another member told him several months ago that a space ship following the comet was coming to pick then up.

"They did not say they were going to commit suicide, but they did indicate to me that they would be leaving the planet," Nick Matzorkis said.

Matzorkis, president of Interact Entertainment Group, said he and the employee he would identify only as Rio drove to the mansion Wednesday after opening the package, and called police after they discovered the bodies.

The mass suicide in Rancho Santa Fe may have its roots in another cult-like following that surfaced in California more than 20 years ago.

In 1975, hundreds of residents from California, Colorado, New

Mexico and Oregon left family and belongings behind to join a gro headed by Marshall H. Applewhn and Bonnie Lu Trusdale Nettles.

ABC News reported that the leader of the Rancho Santa Fe cult may indeed be Applewhite, who was once in a psychiatric hospital, and that the co-founder is Nettles, who died in 1985.

Back in the 1970s, the mysterious couple referred to themselves as "The Two."

The Heaven's Gate Web site, which is reportedly linked to the Rancho Santa Fe cult, also refers to its founders as "The Two," and says they began "rounding up their crew in "75."

"The Two" held various meetings at public locations throughout the western United States, promising followers celestial bliss and a ride in a UFO.

They called their group Human Individual Metamorphosis, or HIM, and convinced many listeners to shed their personal belongings, relationships and children in order to prepare for the trip.

The similarities between the beliefs of the HIM followers and those associated with the Higher Source cult in Rancho Santa Fe appear rooted in an odd belief system incorporating UFOs and biblical Scripture.

The Heaven's Gate Web site says "our Older Member in the Evolutionary Level above human (the Kingdom of Heaven') has made it clear to us that Hale-Bopp's approach is the 'marker' we've been waiting for." The passage also proposes "graduation' from the Human Evolutionary Level."

Similarly, an advertisement announcing a HIM meeting in San Jose in 1975 explains "The opportunity is here, when we as humans can fully evolve into a higher being. There is now on this planet two people from the high level, UFO Beings here to help us and many others with this transition."

Also on the Heaven's Gate Web site was the prediction that "before that spacecraft comes, one or more of us could lose our physical vehicles (bodies) due to 'recall,' accident or at the hands of some irate individual."

Similarly, "The Two" distributed fliers saying they would die and then be resurrected. They later told talk-show host Victor Boc at KOME radio in San Jose that they would be assassinated within the next two months.

Similarly, "The Two" in 1975, attracted a following as intellectual as the computer-savvy group in Rancho Santa Fe.

Bob Thompson, a computer programmer at the University of Oregon who had attended some meetings, recalled "The Two" talking in vague biblical terms. "The implication was that you might leave in a UFO," Thompson said in 1975.

"The Two" were eventually identified as Marshall Herff Applewhite and Bonnie Lu Trusdale Nettles.

Online Cult As Mysterious In Death As In Life

By KIM PETERSON
Daily Transcript Staff Writer

Just who is the Heaven's Gate group?

The eyes of the world focused on San Diego County Thursday to learn more about the 39 men and women who were found dead, shrouded in purple cloths and seemingly at peace, in a large Rancho Santa Fe home in an apparent mass suicide?

More than 100 media services reportedly descended on the rented house on Colina Norte in the past two days, ever since Sheriff's deputies reported ed discovering the bodies late Wednesday afternoon. Some reporters

camped outside the driveway all day Thursday waiting for news, while others held vigil outside the County Medical Examiners office or the Del Mar Fairgrounds.

But the most telling posthumous glimpse of the Heaven's Gate members, including their mission in life and their reasons for dying, is on a currently inaccessible Interior net site at http://www.heavensgate.com. In what could be perceived as an online suicide note, the page states that the approach of comet Hale-Bopp was a signal to leave the earth.

"Our older member in the evolutionary level above human (the Kingdom of Heaven') has made it clear to us that Hale-Bopp's approach is the 'marker' we've been waiting for," according to the group's home page. "The time for the arrival of the spacecraft from the level above human to take us home to their world."

The authors of the page mention the group's "joy" at the opportunity, adding that members were happily prepared and thankful to leave. The page links to several more of the group's missives, including "Our Position against Suicide," "Last Chance to Advance beyond Human" and "Planet About to Be Recycled." The sites were inaccessible throughout the day after its server went down, according to the provider, the Fayetteville, Tenn.based Valley Internet.

"The server just crashed because of the number of hits it was getting," said Roy LeCrone, owner of Valley Internet. "It's not a large server, and it's unable to cope with the amount of interrogation. It's just clogged up."

The enormous amount of hits has clogged up the rest of the server, leaving unrelated Web sites on the same host inaccessible as well, LeCrone said. He added that he

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"Online Cult As Mysterious In Death As In Life"

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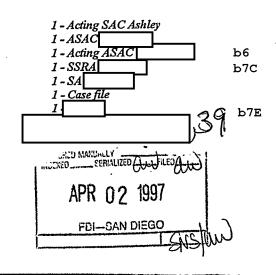
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Online Cult

Continued From Page 1A had no idea who the group or its members were.

"We're innocent bystanders in all this."

Valley Internet also hosted sites for Fayetteville churches and real-tors.

An InterNic search showed the site was registered under the name Chris Knight, and an accompanying phone number turned out to belong to a Days Inn hotel in Santa Monica. A Days Inn employee said there was no record of a Chris Knight at the hotel nor did any employee bear the name.

Heaven's Gate members operated another Web page supporting their business of creating Internet sites for other organizations. This site,

http://www.highersource.com, is a strictly business site and does not feature Heaven's Gate ideology.

The Higher Source Web site advertised programming, systems analysis and various computer security services and highlighted the "personal discipline" of its workers.

"The individuals at the core of our group have worked closely together for over 20 years," the site read. "We try to stay positive in every circumstance and put the good of a project above any personal concerns or artistic egos."

The Higher Source designed the

Web sites of 1-800-Harmony, the British Masters, the San Diego Polo Club and Samia Rose. Polo Club General Manager Tom Goodspeed told CNN the group claimed to be members of a monastery.

The Higher Source site was hosted by the Cupertino-based Concentric Network Corp., but Concentric spokeswoman Katie Greene made clear that the company had no other ties with the group and was merely a business connection.

Higher Source had pre-paid to lease the Internet space for six months until July, Greene said. She added that Concentric will keep the site running unless authorities step in. She would not say how many hits the site had received.

The Higher Source site is registered on InterNic to a Ben A. Guiat—the same name as a typeface font. An accompanying number belongs to a Ramada Inn in Denver, and hotel staff there said a Ben A. Guiat had never worked there. The e-mail address for Guiat is listed as font@cris.com.

There were rumors that Heaven's Gate members had put out messages on Usenet for months, and an Internet search revealed a message titled "Out of This World (literally) www.heavensgate.com." An author named "heavens" wrote the following message:

"Heaven's Gate: How and When the Door to the Physical Kingdom Level above Human May Be Entered; Organized Religions Are Killers of Souls; UFO's & Space Aliens — Sorting Good from Bad; Final Warning for Possible Survivors."

The message then listed the Heaven's Gate Web address.

The Heaven's Gate site delves into the theory behind the group's origin, or, as the group describes it, "The Simple Bottom Line." The doctrine describes how members of heaven were responsible for nurturing "gardens" that contained human "plants."

The page details how Jesus left behind his body in heaven, which was akin to putting a suit of clothes in a closet, came to Earth and moved into a human body or "vehicle" that had been readied. Jesus took over the body when it was 29 or 30 years old, at the same time that John the Baptist was baptizing it.

The group then offers to those with similar "soul deposits" the chance to connect with the "Level above Human" and to undergo a separation from the world in order to become a new creature of the next evolutionary level.

peterson@sddt.com

Cult Members Used Alcohol And Depressants In Death Sauce

By JANE E. ALLEN
AP Science Writer

A cult of technically savvy computer programmers committed mass suicide with a classic mixture of alcohol and depressants that shuts down breathing.

Dr. Brian Blackbourne, the San Diego County medical examiner, said preliminary toxicology tests indicated all 39 victims ingested combinations of phenobarbital and alcohol.

At a news conference Thursday, Blackbourne said the cult members living in Rancho Santa Fe left behind their recipe for death:

"Take the little package of pudding or applesauce and eat a couple of teaspoons. Pour the medicine in and stir it up. Eat it fairly quickly and then drink the vodka beverage. Then lay back and rest quietly."

After everyone else was dead and their faces covered with purple shrouds, the last two cult members put plastic bags around their heads to cut off their air supply and assure their deaths, Blackbourne said.

They resorted to an inexpensive method that relied on a particularly long-acting, rarely abused drug, said Dr. Greg Thompson, director of the drug information center and professor of clinical pharmacy and emergency medicine at the University of Southern California Schools of Pharmacy and Medicine.

Phenobarbital is an anti-seizure medicine that turns deadly in sufficient quantities and packs a onetwo punch when taken with alcohol. He estimated 50 or 60 pills, usually taken three times a day to prevent seizures, could result in death, "but mixed with alcohol, fewer pills would probably be necessary."

Unlike some popular depressants that act in half an hour, phenobarbital takes four to six hours to begin working and stays in the system 24 to 48 hours.

The vodka-drug combination would slow down the system without initially killing, he said, putting you to sleep. Over the next few hours, "phenobarbital will depress your respiration to the point where you're not breathing and then your heart stops."

Thompson said phenobarbital is easy to obtain and a typical prescription of 100 pills costs about \$3.

"Phenobarbital does not put up a flag of warning to a pharmacist," Thompson said. "If you get an order for this, you assume the person has a seizure disorder."

In contrast, a prescription for short-acting barbiturates like Secobarbital or Pentobarbital "would require a triplicate prescription and since these pills are known for their abuse and dangerous potential, would be much harder to hoard."

Thompson predicted that additional blood tests could show "other drugs involved than just phenobarb and alcohol. If you take somebody's blood and urine, phenobarbs and alcohol are quickly spotted by an enzymatic test, while other drugs might be hiding."

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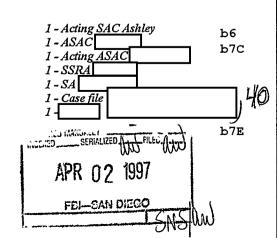
"Cult Members Used Alcohol And Depressants In Death Sauce"

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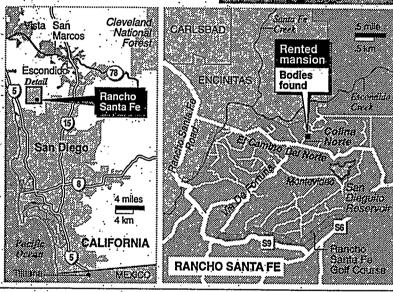
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Mass suicide





Cultists were almost invisible in Rancho Santa Fe

By Mark Sauer

STAFF WRITERS

RANCHO SANTA FE — It took the bizarre mass exit from this Earth of 39 cyber-minded souls to full this posh village on a national map, and that's the last place its wealthy residents wanted to be.

In this secluded enclave of fivestar restaurants and ubiquitous real estate offices, people mind their own business and bank accounts and expect others to do the same.

And TV crews and reporters

And TV crews and reporters from around the country who crawled about the red-roofed shops and eucalyptus-lined boulevards all discovered the same thing yesterday: Nobody knew a thing about the cybermonks who chased the streak of a comet and launched themselves foward "Heaven's Gate."

Yet a few miles north in Encinitias, several shop owners reported sightings of the space-bound members of Heaven's Gate, with their black pajama-style clothes and buzz-cut hairdos.

Robyn Ketchum, assistant manager at a local pancake house, said that within the last two weeks she waited on two women in their 30s and a man in his 50s who clearly belonged to the group.

"I especially remember the womthe because they had really short hair, like their heads were almost shaved," Ketchum said yesterday at The Original Pancake House in Enceinitas. "They said 'please' and thank you' and they just seemed

Very nice."
Al Vigmato, owner of Rancho
Ear Wash in Del Mar, said he first
met members of the group last
Spring, either April or May.

Indicate page, newspapër, city, state

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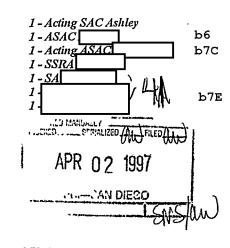
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"Cultists were almost invisible in Rancho Santa Fe"

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Several of them came into my ear wash and told me they were from a monastery," he said, adding that they traveled around to different organizations such as drug rehabilitation centers to see if counselors were needed.

"The men, Father John and Brother Hal, wanted to make a deal to get the eight or nine vehicles they owned cleaned once a week,"

he said.

They wanted a discount for the wolume business but instead Vigmato said he offered to do a good turn

and wash the cars for free.

Less than six months later, Vigmato said his good deed was returned "in spades" when his office computer system started acting up. He said the monks fixed the system,

saving him hundreds of dollars.

Vigmato was watching television Wednesday night when TV cameras focused on the cars parked at the entrance of the home. He immediately made the connection.

"These men and women were quiet and non-aggressive," he said, adding that he had met four women and more than a dozen men from

Recently, a car wash supervisor, Alex Fleet, was given a present from Brother Hal - a triangularshaped holographic pendant.

"When Alex moved the pendant around, there was an alien (whose)

head moved," Vigmato said.

Residents of Rancho Santa Fe, meanwhile, said that while their community's enormous lots serve to insulate neighbors, odd-looking cult members could not have gone unnoticed in the tiny, tony town. But, somehow, they did.

Even close neighbors of the reclusive group shrugged when asked if they had seen anything out of the

ordinary.

"I go by that place 30 times a day and I've never seen a thing. Around here, people like that stand out like a sore thumb," said Bob Myron, who lives in a gated mansion on one street down from Colima Norte.

As a delivery driver for United Parcel Service, Peter Guerrero makes almost daily deliveries to homes on the street. "It's eerie now, but I never saw anything out of the ordinary. Most of the time I'd just knock on the door and put the packages over the gate."

It was impossible to glance down any of the handful of streets in this village for Hollywood expatriates and the equestrian elite without seeing a camera crew or notebooktoting journalist yesterday.

It is an event that got so big so quickly: reporters ended up interviewing one another to gauge scope

and heft.

The enormity of the story was not lost on Chris Ryan of Phoenix. When the "unconventional public relations man" learned Wednesday night that 39 bodies had been discovered in a Southern California mansion, he got in his car and headed west.

Ryan specializes in big media events. He swoops in, finds one or two key players and gets them to hire him to represent them in book or TV movie deals. But no insiders to this story survived.

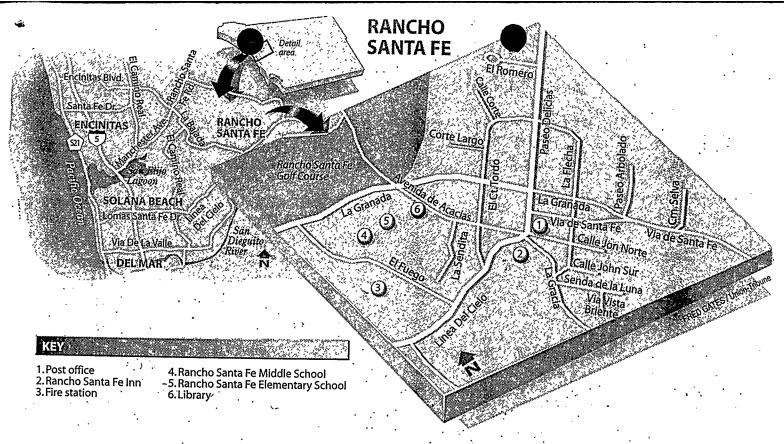
"I have been to every grocery store, pharmacy, restaurant and coffee shop in this village. Nobody knew these people — it's like they never existed," said Ryan as he prepared to head back to Arizona yesterday afternoon.

"You've got 39 people in that mansion; they had to eat, they had to shop, mail stuff, get gas. But they covered their tracks real well. They were on the Internet, but they weren't really here. Amazing.

One man in "The Ranch" who did encounter Heaven's Gate members was Tom Tighe of Gig@Bites, a cyber cafe in the heart of Rancho Santa Fe.

"Some of them came in here last October. They said they were from that house - I knew it was them because I know the house," said Tighe, whose establishment features banks of computers. "They had some little kids with them. I spoke with a very attractive young lady. There was nothing remarkable about them, just kids playing on the computers."

Staff writer Agnes Roletti and news assistant Kelly Terry contributed to this report.





Cameras for breakfast: Free-lance cameraman Skip Brown (right) directed his camera at a customer having breakfast at Rancho Santa Fe's Cafe Mille Fleur yesterday.

2 horrors have much in common

1978 Jonestown tragedy also claimed followers of messianic leader

-By Dana Wilkie STAFF WRITER

EAST OAKLAND - At the rear of a graffiti-blemished cemetery in this frayed neighborhood, tombstones march neatly down a grassy slope, then end abruptly at a swath of lawn as broad as any good-sized back vard.

A single granite headstone marks this solitary expanse — a tribute to the 409 bodies that lie beneath it, nearly half of the dead recovered from the horrifying mass suicide-

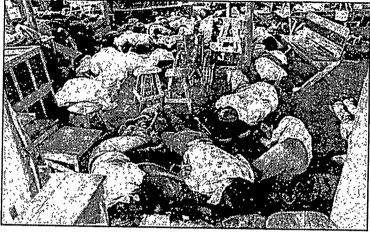
In scope, Wednesday's discovery of 39 people who apparently killed themselves in a Rancho Santa Fe •Imansion may not approach the Nov. v18, 1978, tragedy in South Amerioca, where more than 900 people led by the Rev. Jim Jones died, most from drinking grape-flavored punch laced with cyanide. But the two events have begun to mirror each other in other chilling respects.

From all appearances, both ogroups involved members shepcherded by leaders with Messiah-like delusions. Both had followers who became isolated and renounced this world in hopes for a better afterlife. And members of both insisted on ending their own clives, on doing so by ingesting dead-"ly substances, and on doing it collectively.

A. Much remains a mystery about the San Diego-area computer cult whose members died on their backs, arms at their sides, faces and ichests covered with shrouds of pur-Eple cloth. And not much is known "about the apparent leader, "King "Do" to some, who, according to an Internet site the group created, likened himself to the spirit that occupied Jesus' body 2,000 years ago.

But those who lost wives, horothers, daughters and cousins to the People's Temple that Jones brought to the Bay Area in the early 1970s saw similarities yesterday with the Rancho Santa Fe horror.

"How can people still be so stu-"pid, right here in free America?" asked Beverly Oliver, who with San Francisco Rep. Leo Ryan and · others flew to Guyana in November



FILE PHOTO

murder in Jonestown, Guyana, The bodies of Jim Jones' followers filled the group's compound.

1978 to persuade her two teenaged sons and others to leave Jones' jungle pavilion.

She was among 11 wounded on an airstrip by Jones' gunmen as the group prepared to leave. Ryan, three newsmen and a Temple defector were killed. Hours later, Oliver's sons joined in the ritualistic drinking of poisoned juice.

While most followed Jones' order to drink the cyanide, some were shot, injected with poison or forced to drink the deadly beverage when they tried to resist. Adults squirted syringes of the juice into the mouths of infants.

How a faith-healer who held snakes and claimed to yank cancer from people's bodies could amass such a following, including educated professionals and members of San Francisco's political elite, remains a subject of sore speculation here. Among the area's emerging liberal establishment 20 years ago, Jones seemed a mascot who preached racial harmony, equal opportunity and help for the poor. Area politicians including then-Mayor George Moscone, who made Jones chairman of the San Francisco Housing Authority in 1976 - enjoyed the preacher's gift for flattery and his knack for delivering a solid block of voters on Election Day.

'He was able to worm his way into the hearts of people who seek political office, who understand the need to produce votes and volunteers," said Richard Hongisto, a former San Francisco police chief.

To the down-and-out of the Fill-

more District neighborhood where Jones' temple once stood, Jones seemed a saint of a man who fed their poor, gave their homeless beds and created free health clinics and drug treatment programs.

Said Jynona Norwood, an Inglewood minister who lost 27 relatives, including her mother, in Jonestown: "Jim didn't just identify with these people; he got into their psyche. This is what I saw happen there in San Diego: Whoever was leading this sect had to identify with (members).

When allegations of wrongdoing mounted in the Bay Area, Jones moved the settlement to Guyana.

Today, the only thing left of Jones' temple is a fence-enclosed lot of wild grass and ferns littered by the containers of a nearby Kentucky Fried Chicken. The neighborhood is not much different than it was two decades ago, except that the area's youths buy and sell more drugs, said Carmen Johnson, a onetime Jones convert who refused to follow her friends to Guyana.

"It's like a lot of the young people out there now - they don't want to be on drugs, or selling them, and they're looking for someone who seems real," said Johnson.
"I think basically it's the same

thing that's going on now (in San Diego). People are looking for somebody they think will be able to meet their needs."

Staff writer Ed Mendel and researcher Kristine Berg contributed to this 🚁

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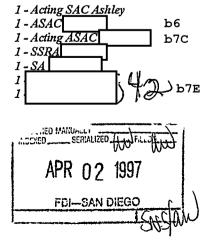
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Shocked ex-boss, fellow worker tell of decent, gifted employees

By Uri Berliner STAFF WRITER

When Mike Afshin learned that workers with the Higher Source computer services group perished in a gruesome mass suicide, his heart sank.

"They were nice, honest and decent, I still can't believe it," said Afshin, owner of Comp-X, a Del

Mar computer shop.

Last fall, Afshin hired a man named Jeff Moore on a contract basis to do programming and computer installation work. He was efficient, clean cut and a longtime associate of the Higher Source. Moore later brought a friend who called himself Rio to work with him.

"They were young, healthy people, very knowledgeable about com-

puters," said Afshin.

His contract workers left for lunch at precisely 12:15 p.m. and said they lived communally in a large house called "The Monastery." They spoke of unity, spiritual force, and once declined a job because "they had to sit together and fast," said Afshin.

Members of Higher Source, which belonged to a cult group known as Heaven's Gate, believed UFOs traveled in the wake of the Hale-Bopp comet, they apparently changed jobs frequently, and used pseudonyms such as Otis Paceman.

Afshin, who still has the group's Higher Source Contract Enterprises business card, said he never obtained much personal background about Rio, but a former Higher Source worker apparently was the first to discover the bodies of his former associates at the rented Rancho Santa Fe mansion.

Other local businesses also hired Higher Sourcers as free-lance workers. Moore later worked with two female members of the group named Nora and Golden at Arrowhead General Insurance Agency in Mira Mesa. An Arrowhead employee, who requested anonymity, said they were in their 30s or 40s, and that Moore had been with the religious group for 22 years.

During several months at the office, the employee said he became

close with all three.

He said they kept to a strict daily.

large communal meal at 5 a.m. — "something like pasta, salad and pie" - and no other meals during the day except for fruit and a lemon drink containing cayenne pepper.

The three wore their hair very short, dressed conservatively, in baggy dress pants and Oxford-style button-down shirts, and arrived at work together in a van. They pooled their money. They aimed to merge their individual identities into a single communal spirit. Their demeanor was asexual and emo-

"They were caught up in that 'X-Files' thing, that the truth is out there somewhere and the government is covering it up."

Mike Afshin, owner of Comp-X, a computer shop in Del Mar

tionally aloof, resembling the cool detachment of "Star Trek" Vulcans, the anonymous source said.

"Once, I said, 'Jeff, when I look at you, I see Nora, and when I look at Nora, I see Golden," the Arrow-head employee recalled. "And they said, 'great, that's the highest compliment you can give us.'

Some employees at Arrowhead thought they were "angelic" and were distraught over the mass suicides. "There's a lot of counseling going on here," said the employee.

In recent weeks, Moore, Nora and Golden expressed anxiety about the Hale-Bopp comet, and the triple witching hour" — Sunday's simultaneous appearance in the sky regimen: up at 3 a.m. for prayer, a of the comet, Mars, and a partial

"They were caught up in that "X-Files" thing, that the truth is out there somewhere, and the government is covering it up.

Afshin of Comp-X in Del Mar also recalled them as being preoccupied by the power of the federal government: "They didn't like the U.S. policies toward other countries. They said the government was always interfering."

But the three Higher Source members apparently never let their beliefs interfere with work, which the Arrowhead General employee described as "excellent." They reportedly earned about \$35 an hour at the insurance company.

When the Higher Source members announced they needed to leave the company early this month, Arrowhead General put on a full-court press to keep them.

"We talked to them about it for weeks. We made counteroffers, but they said no money on earth could keep them," said the employee.

As the deadline approached, the employee said two of the members, Moore and Golden, became uncharacteristically nervous.

"They became indecisive. It was like part of them didn't want to leave.

Before they moved into the mansion where they died, the Heaven's Gate group may have tried to set up a hospice for cancer patients at a house in an unincorporated section of the county between Escondido and Rancho Santa Fe, neighbors

In early September, a handful of members moved into one of five houses on Camino de Estrellas, according to neighbors and a real estate agent.

The group moved out at the end of October, holding a sale where they sold off thousands of dollars of mostly new furniture, said Ruth Preston, a neighbor on the street.

Staff writer L. Erik Bratt contributed to this report.

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

San Diego Union-Tribune San Diego, CA

Date: Edition:

Friday, 3/28/97

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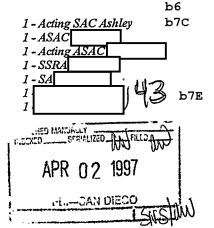
"Shocked ex-boss, fellow worker tell of decent, gifted employees"

Character: Classification:

Submitting Office

San Diego Indexing:





Local TV slow to get on a worldwide story

By John Freeman TELEVISION-RADIO WRITER

Welcome — gruesomely, tragically, incomprehensibly — to San Diego's version of the O.J. Simpson trials and the JonBenet Ramsey murder investigation. The horrifying discovery of the mass suicide in Rancho Santa

Fe broke on TV late Wednesday af-

COMMENTARY

ternoon and quickly mushroomed into a major national and international story.

We're having trouble remembering when anything like this has ever happened in this country. (The event) is as bitalist as it

could possibly be."

And KFMB/Channel 8's Chris Sainders reported that the thensuspected mass suicide was a case of "being, belonging and believing at theories on the end of the world and seeking a new and better life through death."

"Still, compared to CNN, MSNBC and the major networks, local stations were surprisingly slow to react to the story's obvious enormity, at least Wednesday night.

Within only a few hours, the major network outlets descended, full-blown, on the normally tranquil North County enclave. By yesterday morning, as many as eight news copters circled overhead at various times; on the ground, an estimated 30 or so TV satellite trucks set up shop.

All four local news outlets duly covered the story in their regular news blocks, but none opted to go: "live" with extended coverage that

would interrupt regular prime-time programming.

Why not?

KNSD/Channel 39 news director Irv Kass said he believed that not enough new leads were available between 8 p.m. and 11 p.m., at least not enough to justify more than a few break-ins. "We are always making judgments about what serves the viewers best," he said yesterday, as his troops inundated the site. "If there had been new information available, we would've done it."

There was, and they should've.

Same with the three other out-

Instead of going live, KNSD urged viewers to turn to MSNBC, wise advice, given MSNBC's stellar reporting and analysis, headed by the unflappable Brian Williams, whose anchor stint spanned three hours.

As for the so-called "all-news" outlet, News Channel 15, it merely repeated KGTV/Channel 10's wheel of newscasts rather than filing original reports. KGTV's Carol LeBeau wrapped up the 11 p.m. newscast, saying: "More details are coming in with each minute of this story."

Bizarre as they are, those details continued to emerge yesterday, a process likely to continue for weeks, maybe months, to come.

Perhaps it's unfair to compare local stations to CNN and MSNBC, those all-news cable networks that revel in such breaking news stories. But this particular story was, undeniably, a San Diego story, one that cried out to be covered locally, from the very beginning. If L.A.'s KTLA/Channel 5 was on it thor-

Indicațe page, newspaper, city, state

A-6 San Diego Union-Tribune San Diego, CA

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Title:

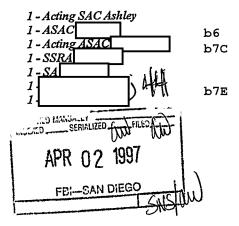
"Local TV slow to get on a worldwide story"

Character: or

Classification:

Submitting Office

San Diego Indexing: \emptyset





On the air: A Fox news crew aired a live spot yesterday. In the background is the home where cult victims were found.

oughly, where were 8, 10, 39 and ered half-hour shows on the story, 51?

There was no excuse to not cover it Wednesday night from every conceivable angle. Consider that, on Wednesday night, NBC's "Dateline" and ABC's "PrimeTime Live" and "Nightline" devoted large chunks of live coverage to the sto-

And yesterday, CNN's "Burden of Proof" and "TalkBack Live" delivand followed it closely all day.

To give local outlets their due, by yesterday afternoon, they had joined the fray with some solid, insightful reports from the site. KGTV even bumped "Oprah" an hour to 3 p.m., in order to start an expanded newscast at 4 p.m.
Finally, they had jumped into the

story, slugging it out with the big boys. ·

Tragedy was major story for Tijuanans

By Leonel Sanchez, STAFF WRITER

TIJUANA — Artemio Lira bought three different newspapers yesterday, more than usual for the 35-year-old attorney.

But with headlines such as "Horror in San Diego," and "Collective Mass Suicide" screaming from the front pages of the papers, Lira was hungry for information about the mass suicide in Rancho Santa Fe.

"I'm worried about the religious side of this story," he said as he scanned headlines at a street-corner store. "I want to know who these people were because if it happened in the United States it can happen in Baja California," he said.

Lira's concerns were shared by television news directors and

newspaper editors here.

In a country where death and religion are daily preoccupations, the mass suicide of 39 cult followers in Rancho Santa Fe

was a story worth following.

Maricarmen Flores, XETV Channel 12 news director, said she dispatched four reporters and camera crews to Rancho Santa Fe as soon as she heard Wednesday evening that at least 10 people had been found dead in a luxurious home an hour's drive from the border.

She said she waited anxiously to hear whether anyone involved was of Mexican origin or Latino. Even though none were identified as such, she still believed the story would generate great interest among viewers.

The tragedy evoked comparisons to the deaths of 13 worshipers during a religious ceremony in a house in late 1990 in the

Mariano Matamoros district of this city.

The worshipers, who were told that "God had descended," were found slumped outside a circle of rope that had been knotted 13 times.

According to authorities, a lethal level of carbon monoxide accumulated in the small unventilated house from a malfunctioning butane gas lamp. The group was asphyxiated during the botched ritual.

Ricardo Ojeda, news director for Radio Latina, predicted the mass suicide in San Diego will renew discussion about the proliferation of religious sects in Mexico.

"People here can relate to it because something similar

happened here before," he said.

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Not all the local papers carried the story and not all gave it big play.

The main story in one newspaper, for example, focused on new immigration laws that take effect Tuesday.

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A-6 San Diego Union-Tribune San Diego, CA

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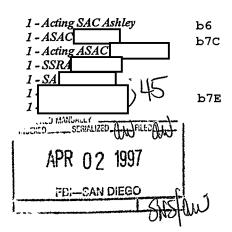
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"Tragedy was major story for Tijuanans"

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Heaven's Gate created Internet buzz last summer

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Title:

"Heaven's Gate created Internet buzz last summer"

Character:

Classification:

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San Diego Indexing:



By Jeff Ristine and Daniel de Vise

Long before carrying out their mass suicide in Rancho Santa Fe, devotees of the Heaven's Gate cult amused, annoyed and intrigued fellow Internet users with opaque comments hinting at their paranormal view of life.

A Heaven's Gate article distributed in August generated particular scorn. It presented itself as a communication from a reincarnated Jesus Christ promising to soon depart this world in a "next level mothership.

A shorter, more cryptic message, posted in June to Usenet newsgroups on subjects ranging from guns to Star Trek, carried what appeared to be an advertisement for the then-obscure Heaven's Gate Web site.

"UFOs and Space Aliens — Sorting Good From Bad," it offered. "Final Warning for Possible Survi-

Internet user Doug Natelson, contacted by e-mail vesterday, said he remembered "being struck by just how nutty it was, even on the Net-kook scale."

Message on the Internet

associated with the group that created the Heaven's Gate Web site posted a púzzling message in at least a dozen internet newsgroups, areas devoted to a specific subject of interest

It appeared in newsgroups ranging from Quakers to depression, "Generation X" to "Star Trek

Heaven's Gate

How and When the door to the Physica Kingdom Level Abové Human May Be Entered Organized Religions Are Killers of Souls UFO's & Space Allens — Sorting Good from Bad Final Warning for Possible Survivors

"Naturally, I'm horrified by what happened," he said of the mass suicide. "It's tragic, and I am genuinely concerned that we'll see more of this sort of thing leading up to the turn of the century."

Elsewhere, anonymous cyberspace orators reacted to the dark news with a mix of passion, parody and

"I just LOVE cult suicide," wrote a 38-year-old New Jersey woman, in a chat room devoted specifically to

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the event. "They are nuttier than a ton of fruitcakes. Though I gotta say, maybe they are right and everyone

The unsigned Heaven's Gate article from the selfstyled Messiah drew similar derision last summer.

"The Jews and Christians promote lies - unknowingly," read its headline, all in capital letters. "The Jews say they love my father — the Christians say they love my father and me — but in fact, they deny us both."

"I came to Earth some 2000 years ago from another physical, biological Evolutionary Level as the expected less harsh. 'Messiah,' or Jesus, and for this current mission, returned to this level, this planet and entered into a newsgroup. "It sure explains a lot! But requires people human body some 24 years ago, Earth-time," said the

After preparing "disciples" for membership in the "NEXT WORLD, the Evolutionary Level Above Human," the writer said he would make his "departure via a 'Next Level' mothership."

Responding Internet users heaped ridicule upon the message.

"Jesus Christ, it's you! How ya doing buddy? It's me, Cleopatra," wrote one.

"This kind of stuff is embarrasing to those of us who have chosen a spiritual life," said a more serious writer

help . . . medical, spiritual, whatever it takes."

An Internet user named Steve said yesterday he tried to contact the group last year but never heard back.

"What a sad end for so many young people," said Steve. "Throughout history we have cycles of doomsday suicides, we seem to be in the midst of another . . . What a tragedy and waste."

But another reader who checked out the group's full "Heaven's Gate" site on the World Wide Web seemed

"Great site," he said to others in the alt.alien.visitors have an open mind, which is something I haven't seen much of in this newsgroup."

Yesterday, even chat rooms normally devoted to courtship set aside their prurient concerns to dwell on the deaths.

On another Internet bulletin board, a San Diego

student pleaded for understanding.

"I feel these individuals did what they believed was right for them," said Paula McBride. "They followed their beliefs. We now have a responsibility not to make a circus of this and a mockery of them."

in the same newsgroup. "Hey, person, please get some Staff writer Frank Klimko contributed to this report.



News conference: County Medical Examiner Brian Blackbourne addressed the media yesterday at the Del Mar Fairgrounds.

School officials move to ease suicide impac

By Steve Schmidt STAFF WRITER

RANCHO SANTA FE - School officials moved yesterday to cushion the news of the cult suicide by sending a team of psychologists and counselors into classrooms.

R. Roger Rowe, superintendent of the tiny Rancho Santa Fe School District, said the team answered questions and tried to ease student anxiety about the bizarre deaths.

Rowe and others said children in the district, which includes the neighborhood where the mass suicide occurred, seemed more puzzled by the deaths than anything.

Child psychologist Keith Kanner, who led the 10-member crisis team, said students were bewildered that a large group of adults would take such a tragic step.

Many children also felt sorry for the relatives of the dead, he said. "They felt very bad about (the impact) on the families," Kanner said. "Some of them even talked about writing letters to the families.'

Several parents and students said the tragedy was the subject of intense discussion.

Parent Audrey Phillips, a licensed counselor, said some primary-grade children, wrestling with the concept of a cult suicide, said they feared it could happen to them.

"It really scared them," Phillips said last night. "One girl was worried that it could be contagious, like a cold is contagious."

A sixth-grader said the suicides were the talk of the schoolyard. "You just have to remember that you don't get involved in stuff like that," the boy said.

The K-8 district, which runs a middle and elementary school on La Granada, in the heart of this village, is 21/2 miles from the Colina Norte mansion where the deaths occurred.

Among those enrolled in the 660student district is the son of Sam Koutchesfahani, the businessman who rented the house to the religious group, Rowe said.

The crisis team emphasized that it's important for students to express their feelings. And when they feel troubled, they need to turn to others for help, Kanner said.

"We don't want kids to internalize their feelings," said Kanner, director of the child life and development program at Mercy Hospital.

He said the crisis team also stressed to the children that mass suicide is an uncommon event. All's

In a letter sent home to parents yesterday, Rowe said the district is trying to maintain as normal a routine as possible "in order to provide a stable and supportive environment for our students."

Neighboring districts were more low key in their reaction to the suicides.

The San Dieguito Union High School District placed counselors on alert, but as the school day wound down, none of the campuses had requested their services.

Torrie Norton, district director of pupil services, said administrators were concerned that sending in crisis teams would create a sense of hysteria and give undeserved recognition to the subject of suicide; 1,

Counselors were also made available within the Solana Beach School District, but there was little to no demand, district officials said.

Students in the Encinitas Union School District are on spring break. Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

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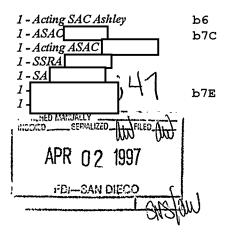
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"School officials move to ease suicide impact"

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Submitting Office





Quiet community not quite up to media frenzy

By Dwight Daniels
STAFF WRITER

RANCHO SANTA FE — Everywhere one turned here yesterday, someone was watching or being watched.

Camera crews and reporters — local, national and international — descended by the hundreds on this quiet enclave, known for its horses, meandering streets and towering eucalyptus trees.

With half a dozen news helicopters still circling overhead, gone was the peace and serenity usually enjoyed by residents of one of the state's wealthiest communities. Instead, the scene was a frenzy of media activity with reporters trying to interview anyone within reach, even other reporters.

It was a news-gathering scene not unlike those at the O.J. Simpson trials, journalists said.

Encounters between journalists and residents didn't always go smoothly. When a woman from a residence near the macabre suicide scene came out to offer some chocolate-covered strawberries to police, photographers swooped in. She grew angry and demanded that her photo not be taken.

"It's sad because we thought the gesture was something nice," a newspaper photographer said. "I wish she understood we're just doing our job."

It was as if residents close to Colina Norte were living in a fishbowl, they said. News people — some of whom camped outside homes overnight — watched through windows as residents made breakfast or walked out in their bathrobes to get the newspaper.

"No, young man," a middle-aged woman said before a reporter could say good morning. "I have nothing to add. Sorry."

Reporters getting the cold shoulder from residents was not uncommon, said San Francisco television correspondent Thuy Vu, who works for KPIX Channel 5.

"It's been a mixed thing, though," she added. "The closer people live (to the mansion); the more sensitive they've been. But not all cases. Some have been very polite, very forthcoming."

"Even the media people have been pretty polite," CHP officer Dennis Dyer said, as he stood on duty outside the mansion.

Rancho Santa Fe residents have "a right to be a bit sensitive about the image of their community," said Peter Smith, the town manager. "Some things that have been reported have been a little sensationalized. This is a rural and friendly community. It's a place where people care about one another."

Smith noted the victims aren't local. Indeed, had the association known of the group's business activities in the house, steps would have been taken to shut them down.

"The area was zoned single-family," he said. "They weren't a single family, and we also do not allow businesses operated out of homes."

Sarah Gross, a BBC producer working with a correspondent to send television and radio feeds to Britain for domestic and international broadcast, said she hoped news crews were sensitive to the community's privacy. Residents, she said, should know crews are here because of the enormity of what happened. "It's all the more shocking because it happened in such a nice place," Gross said.

A crew from a French network, TF1, arrived in California a few days ago to visit the Los Angeles County Coroner's Office, where the crew planned to tape a documentary about death. When news broke Wednesday of events here, they headed straight to San Diego County.

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A-5 Şan Diego Union-Tribune Şan Diego, CA

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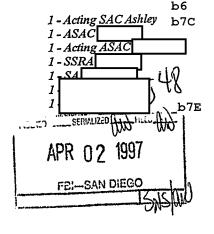
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Character: or Classification:

Submitting Office







Quizzed: Tom Goodspeed, general manager of ... the Rancho Santa Fe Poto Club, was interviewed yesterday outside the property where 39 people died.

FRED GREAVES /Union-Tribune

Other video crews and print reporters were from Canada, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Japan, Germany and Mexico.

"It's a big, big story in Denmark," said Torsten Jansen, 33, a correspondent for the Danish Broadcasting Corporation. "It's a universal story. Everybody, everywhere is talking about it."

German newsman Helmut Voss, a foreign correspondent for 36 years, was frustrated with "having this wonderful story to write and no place for it to be published." His German papers — with 30 million readership — don't publish on Good Friday.

"So now I'm trying to write a larger story, an overarching story," he said. "California was notorious for this cult kind of story, like the Manson family situation years ago. Now I guess it is again."



Taping the scene: A local news photographer in a helicopter is shown taping personnel from the Medical Examiner's Office yesterday as they removed some of the 39 bodies found after a mass suicide in Rancho Santa Fe. The bodies were transported in a refrigerated truck to the Medical Examiner's Office.

Believed spaceship would carry them to far better world

By Sharon L. Jones, J. Harry Jones and Kelly Thornton STAFF WRITERS .

The 39 members of the Heaven's Gate cult who poisoned themselves in a Rancho Santa Fe mansion apparently believed they were going to hitch a ride to a better life aboard a spaceship trailing the Hale-Bopp comet.

They had systematically planned their deaths for months, even years. And they took great care not to leave a mess behind as they carried out their plan, leaving their belongings packed neatly beside their bodies

and identification in their shirt pockets.

"We know whatever happens to us after we leave our bodies is a step forward," a pale, balding man believed to be the group's 65-year-old leader, Marshall Applewhite, said on a videotape distributed before the mass suicide.

He added ominously, "Your only chance to evacuate is to leave with us."

As authorities worked around the clock yesterday to uncover the details of one of the nation's worst mass suicides:

■ Solemn medical examiner's personnel removed the bodies and began conducting autopsies.

■ Authorities said the poison was a mixture of alcohol and phenobarbitol - a barbiturate, anti-seizure and tranquilizing drug.

■ It was determined that 21 of the dead were women, and that the ages of the dead ranged from 26 to 72. They died in separate groups: 15 the first day, 15 the

See CULTISTS on Page A-

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

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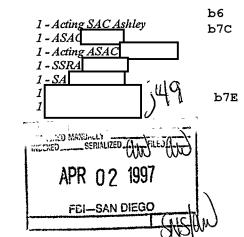
Title:

"Believed spaceship would carry them to far better world"

Character: Classification:

Submitting Office





Cultists

Acquaintances say they were intelligent, polite

Continued from A-1

second and nine the third day.

■ Details about the cult emerged from World Wide Web pages, cult watchers, clients and acquaintances.

And hundreds called a toll-free number set up for those who fear their relatives are among the dead.

In Sacramento, Gov. Pete Wilson called the mass suicide "terribly sad" and offered state aid for the investigation. In Washington, President Clinton called the deaths "heartbreaking, sickening, shock-

The group's members left behind two videotapes explaining their beliefs, and left other teachings on the

World Wide Web.

Authorities found a letter in the Colina Norte house explaining the group's philosophies, but did not disclose details.

There also was a computer, left on, with a digital image of the Hale-Bopp comet. "We haven't had the ability or time to process whatever information is on that computer, said sheriff's Cmdr. Alan Fulmer, who had 50 homicide detectives and evidence technicians on the

Dozens of media people and onlookers converged on the streets around the sprawling estate yesterday. Fifteen-year-old Imaltzin Olvera watched the news-gathering process with fascination.

"You wouldn't think something like this would happen in a place like this," she said.

The bodies

All 39 bodies were loaded into three trucks and delivered to the county Medical Examiner's Office. The last bodies left at 9:45 a.m.

The names of the dead were not released because their relatives were still being notified. Autopsies and toxicology tests were expected to continue through the weekend, with assistance from Los Angeles County coroners.

Authorities seemed impressed by the group's neatness and thor-

ough planning.

Medical Examiner Brian Blackbourne described the house as immaculate, adding that the identification documents the dead left behind were a "great help" in identifying the bodies.

The suicides

The group's members took their lives in shifts over several days, authorities said.

They packed their clothing in black suitcases, donned brand-new matching black Nike sneakers, dark shirts and black pants, neatly laid their eyeglasses beside them, and followed a printed recipe. According to Blackbourne, the recipe read, "Take this package of pudding or applesauce, put the medicine in it and stir, eat it quickly, drink the vodka mixture and lay back and rest quietly.'

The living covered the faces of the dead with purple shrouds and disposed of plastic bags that may have been used to hasten death.

The bodies of two members were found with plastic bags over their heads. Investigators believe they drank their poison last, lingering to place the soft fabric over the corpses of the others. Copies of the recipe were found near some bod-

Sheriff's deputies initially concluded that all of the dead were men because they all had very short haircuts.

Officials offered no theories as to why the cult members took their own lives, but said the members

Family information

The San Diego County medical examiner's toll-free number for family information is (800) 600-0646. As of late yesterday, hundreds of people had called the line.

seen on the videotapes appeared happy about their decision.

"What I saw (on the tape) was an individual who was very upbeat, very outgoing, who did not appear to be upset or frightened with what they were talking about doing," Fulmer said.

Sheriff Bill Kolender offered condolences to the families, saying, "My heart goes out to the families and relatives of the victims."

The cult and its 'temple'

The group apparently was founded in the 1970s by Applewhite and his partner, Bonnie Lu Nettles. The couple, called "Bo" and "Peep," believed that death could be overcome with help from humans in a spaceship.

That cult disbanded, but it apparently reformed under a new name. On a videotape called "Last chance to evacuate earth before it's recycled," a man identifying himself as Do pleaded for people to join him and his followers.

He said, "This planet is about to be recycled, refurbished, started over.... The purpose of this tape is to warn you that this is about to happen, and that it's going to happen very soon."

The group came to San Diego County in the fall.

Members rented two other houses in North County before moving in October into the \$1 million-plus Rancho Santa Fe estate, which reportedly was rented for \$7,000 a month.

The 9,200-square-foot house is of modernized Spanish design, with a plain tan stucco exterior and oversized picture windows beneath a red-tile roof.

It sits atop a hill covered with carefully tended gardens filled with palms, red Japanese maples, red and white roses and stands of flowering birds of paradise.

Cult members called it their. "temple."

Sleeping in bunk beds, they quietly produced Web pages for such clients as a polo club, a company selling British cars and car accessories, and a firm selling compact

disks.

The ascension

As they produced cyber advertisements, the group's members were planning their deaths, or "ascension to a higher level," as they called it.

In July, someone from the group posted apocalyptic messages on hundreds of specialized Internet bulletin boards. The five-line message, terse and elliptical, reads: "How and When the door to the Physical/Kingdom Level Above Human May be Entered/Organized Religions are Killers of Souls/UFL's and Space Aliens - Sorting Good from Bad/Final Warning for Possible Survivors".

The group's leader posted a much longer message on a religious newsgroup that concludes, "The human kingdom was never meant to be anything but a steppingstone—a realized hell that must be evacuated with the help of a representative from the next evolutionary level—the kingdom of heaven."

They didn't talk much to neighbors after they moved into the house. But members of the group were seen as polite, meticulous and, despite their odd behavior, quite intelligent by those who encountered them the most in the past few months: the real estate agents trying to sell the 14-year-old house.

Marvin Caldwell showed the home at least twice to prospective buyers. He said the living room appeared to have been turned into a meeting room with a large television.

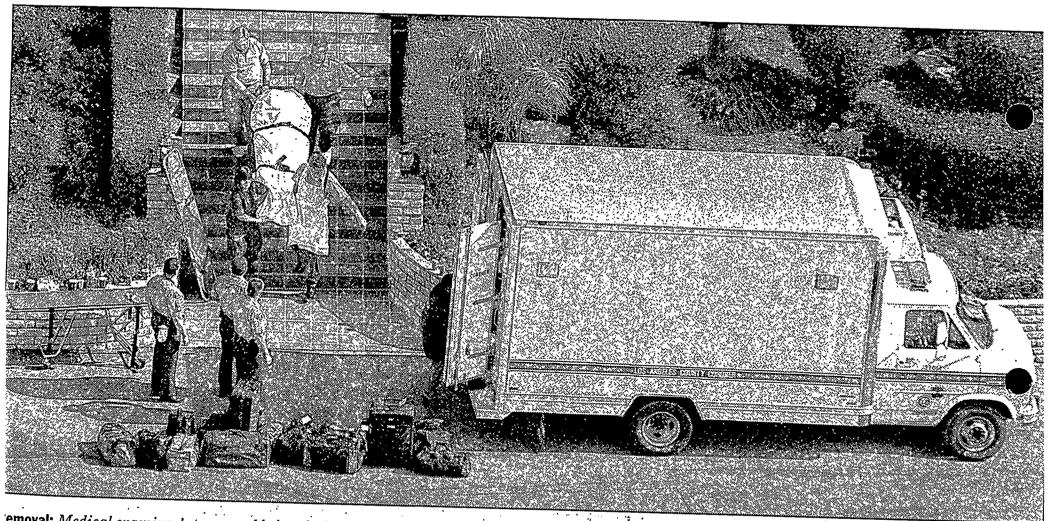
When real estate agent Scott Warren showed the house last week, most of the residents were dressed casually, in jeans and T-shirts. "No one spoke; they were very quiet," he said. "They seemed quite religious."

Five members of the group visited agent Kim Sanford's office last fall.. "Their skin didn't look like it had any protein," she said. "It was transparent."

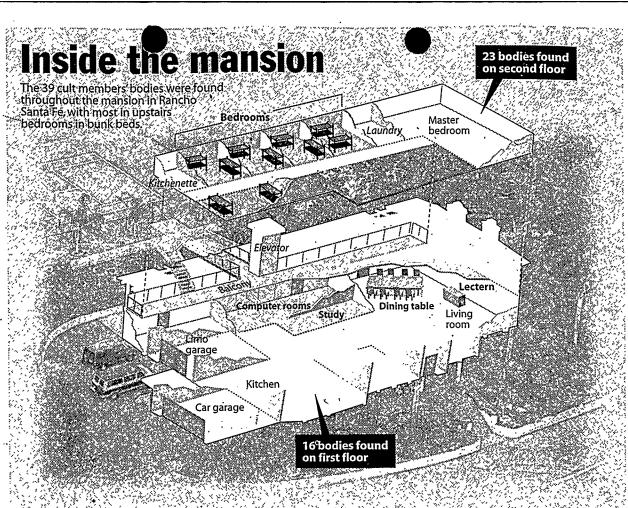
Several real estate brokers believed they met the group's leader. Warren said a tall, thin man who called himself "Father John" escorted him and his client through the house. He described him as intimidating but nice.

"He was very cordial, ... very calm," he said.

Staff writers L. Eric Bratt, Ed Mendel and Lisa Petrillo contributed to this report.

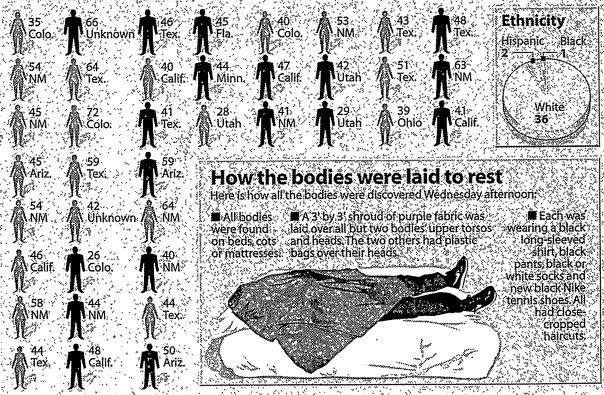


emoval: Medical examiner's personnel bring the bodies of some of the 39 cult members down the steps of their rented Rancho Santa Fe mansion to vans.

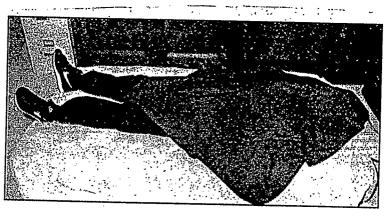


Demographic breakdown

Shown are the deceased broken down demographically by gender, age and state listed on their driver's license:



Cultists planned death for months



SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Scene: A photograph provided by the Sheriff's Department shows the position in which some of the bodies were left.

Grim task falls to medical examiner

Moving 39 bodies done efficiently, with care

By Cheryl Clark STAFF WRITER

When the last truck backed up to the rear of the Medical Examiner's Office in Kearny Mesa yesterday morning, the blue- and red-clad workers went into action.

Professional. Methodical. Emotionless.

They raised the back door of the truck. The 10 bodies — tagged and wrapped in white plastic pouches — were stacked in three tiers of cots inside.

A forklift operator maneuvered his vehicle to face the open door.

The job: Transport the bodies of the Heaven's Gate dead from the truck to a waiting refrigeration trailer because the autopsy room can only handle six corpses at a time.

And there were 29 bodies waiting.

The forklift bed was covered with white sheets, each with the words "Angelica Healthcare" woven into the fabric in pale blue thread.

Some of the bodies were heavy, requiring three people to carry. Others were lighter. They were placed flat and side by side, two at a time, on the forklift bed.

If anyone was bothered by the pungent, musty smell that overtook the scene, they didn't show it.

Two female workers wearing rubber gloves stood on either side of the bed. In unison, they folded the sheets around the bodies, as if they were wrapping laundry. They tied square knots at either end.

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The driver backed up a few yards and turned around, then hoisted the bodies into the refrigeration truck, where more workers lifted them onto another tiered rack.

One of the workers found a pair of wire-rimmed glasses on the truck floor. He handed them to someone who marked and bagged them.

Later, one of the first coroners to enter the Rancho Santa Fe home acknowledged the wear and tear on the staff. "I'm just tired emotionally," said Mark Malamatos, a deputy investigator for the county Medical Examiner's Office who has handled death scenes for 11 years.

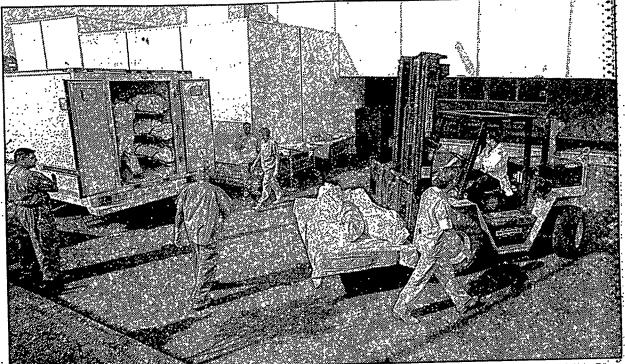
"I feel for the families and the ones who have passed away, but you can't let that affect you doing your job."

For Dr. Brian Blackbourne, the

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FDUARDO CONTRERAS/Union-Tribu

Somber job: Workers at the Medical Examiner's Office used a forklift to unload the second shipment of bodies removed from a mansion in Rancho Santa Fe yesterday morning.

"I'm just tired emotionally."

Medical Examiner's Office investigator Mark Malamatos

county medical examiner, yesterday was one of the longest days of his career. Around noon, he took a break from the stench of formaldehyde and decomposition and walked outside, where Red Cross yolunteers had set up a snack stand for investigators.

"One-and-a-half — two hours for each autopsy," he said in answer to a question. "We're going to be pretty complete — tests for alcohol, controlled substances, sedatives, hypnotics, tranquilizers and some poison. We'll test for them all."

Blackbourne gave a wry smile as he munched a peanut butter cracker. He had been up for 30 hours.

He'd seen worse. Back in 1982, when he was deputy chief medical

examiner in Washington, D.C., an Air Florida Boeing 737 crashed into the Potomac, killing 78 people.

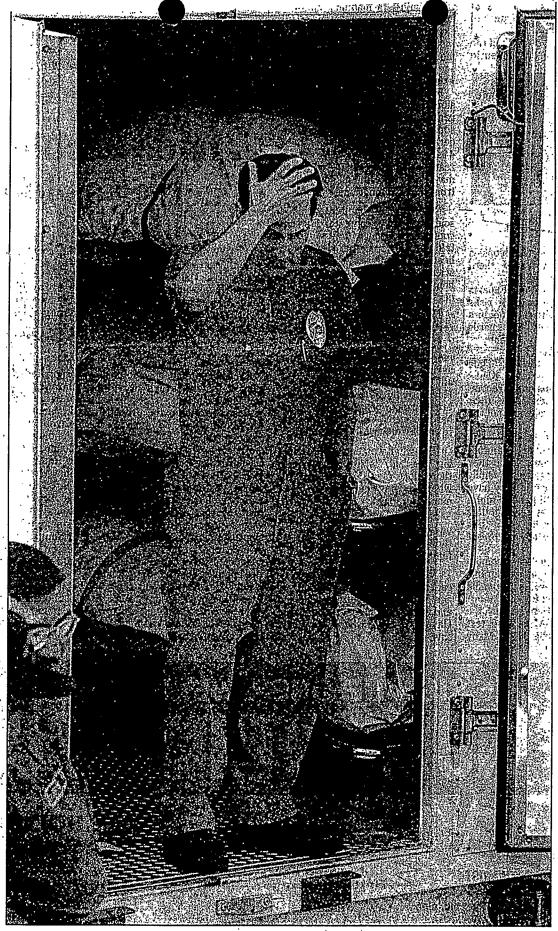
"But that was different," he said.
"That was a cold, cold winter."
Those bodies did not decompose in hot rooms for as long as three days, as these did.

"This is new and different," he said. He smiled again and looked down at his feet. "We're going to determine the cause of death and get them back out of here as soon as we can."

Blackbourne said he learned something from the Air Florida crash: the value of counseling to even these seasoned professionals accustomed to dealing with the macabre and ghastly endpoints of life. "We didn't think it affected the permanent staff. But within a year, five of them found other jobs. I didn't recognize it myself," he said.

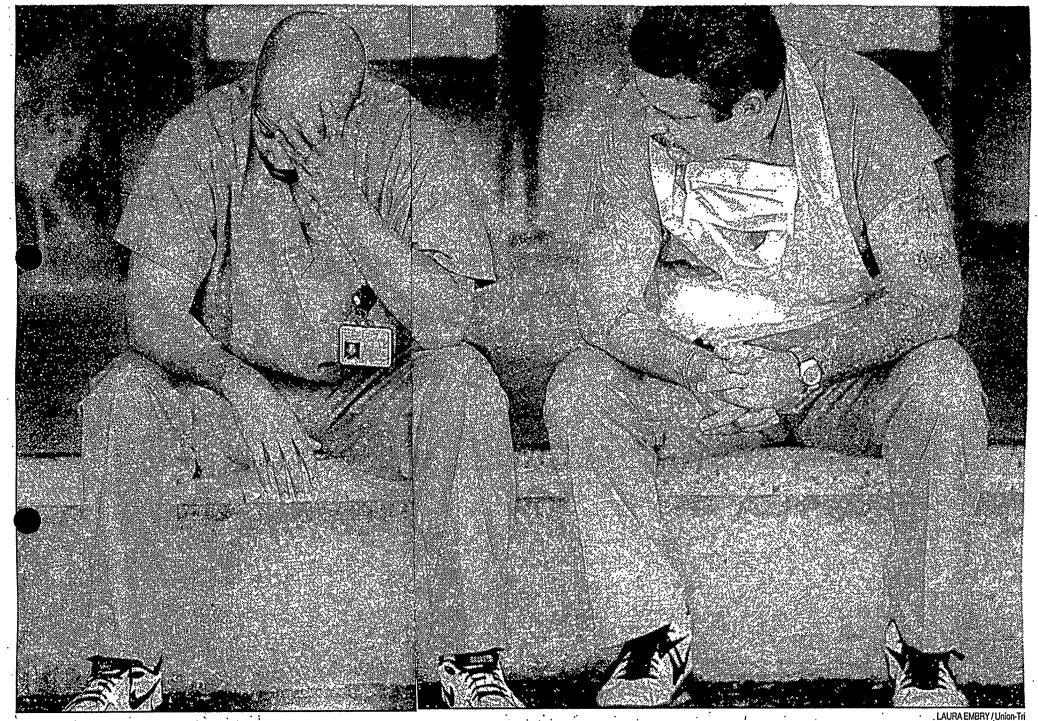
He wouldn't forget that this time.

But for now, there was a job to finish. Families to call, pathology reports to complete. Thirty-nine of them.



EDUARDO CONTRERAS / Union-Tribune

Gruesome task: Mark Malamatos, a medical examiner's investigator, catches his breath as he prepares to help unload the second shipment of bodies at the Medical Examiner's Office in Kearny Mesa.



Respite: Weary personnel from the San Diego County Medical Fxaminer's Office in Kearny Mesa sat on the receiving dock after unloading 39 bodies.

ORIGINS OF THE CULT

'Bo and Peep' began doomsday odyssey in '70s

By Sandi Dolbee, RELIGION & ETHICS EDITOR

hey were, in the end, cyberspiritualists who made their living — and posted their dying — on the Internet.

Their "Heaven's Gate" Web site looms like an epitaph: "Red Alert," the message begins, "Hale-Bopp Brings Closure to Heaven's Gate."

The closure, they believed, was trailing behind Hale-Bopp — a UFO masked by the brilliant comet so it could swoop undetected to Earth and take them to their new life in the heavens. But first, they had to shed

their "earthly containers."

"As promised," the Web site announced, "the keys to Heaven's Gate are here again in Ti and Do (The UFO Two) as they were in Jesus and His Father."

But the keys to this hightech movement have roots far away from the Rancho Santa Fe mansion where they made their deathbeds. The movement that spawned the grisly deaths of 39 men and women apparently goes back to the 1970s, to a pair of Texans who became known as "Bo and Peep" and claimed to be from outer space.

Bo and Peep, who were really Marshall Applewhite and Bonnie Nettles. Nettles died 12 years ago, and

sources said yesterday it appears that Applewhite is one of the victims at Rancho Santa Fe.

The pair caused a media sensation in the 1970s with their claims of being from outer space and wanting to recruit a crew for a spaceship that would come and take them to a higher plane.

Their group, started in 1975, was called HIM (Hu-

man Individual Metamorphosis).

- Last words? The

leader of Heaven's

humans moving up

Gate spoke about

to the "Kingdom Level."

But as they made their way from state to state, preaching to would-be converts in rented lecture halls, they were dubbed "the UFO cult." They convinced scores of followers to abandon their old names, their families and their belongings and to take a vow of celi-

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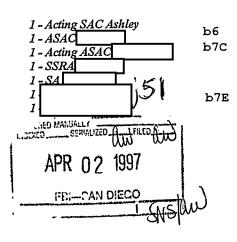
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"Bo and Peep' began doomsday odyssey in '70s"

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Origins

Internet gave clues to cult's beginnings

Continued from A-1

bacy in preparation for the Evolutionary Level Above Human.

Nettles identified herself as a nurse from Houston and Applewhite said he was a musician and son of a Presbyterian minister born in Spur, Texas. The book "Messengers of Deception" by Jacques Vallee says they befriended each other while he was recovering from a nervous breakdown in Houston.

"They had this mission where they were supposed to find a small group of people who would go off with them in a spaceship before the Earth, as they called it, 'spaded itself under,' and they would then be the survivors of the Apocalypse," said Janja Lalich, an author and educator who runs the Cult Recovery and Information Center in the San Franciso Bay Area.

As Bo and Peep, they were targets of flip stories about their sheep, which may explain why they later came to be known as The Two, and more popularly, Ti and

Nettles was Ti (pronounced Tee) and she died in 1985, according to cult experts and other sources. Applewhite was Do (pronounced Doe), and birth records in Texas indicate he would be 65.

Followers of Bo and Peep gradually became disillusioned "because no one was ascending," according to a Web site about cults and UFOs, Truthseekers Review. The group eventually disbanded, Truthseekers Review added, but the writer noted that he "wouldn't be surprised if some went on to form splinter groups."

Actually, sources speculate that what was left of "the UFO cult" went underground and then re-

emerged five years ago to add new converts and gather strength.

If so, the cult picked up a new name along the way — and new, high-tech skills.

In its own history, Heaven's Gate Web site said the organization went into a self-imposed seclusion for nearly 17 years to prepare for this "distant culture from whence they had come." That seclusion ended in 1992, it said.

Cult experts said there are several fringe movements that make their living doing free-lance computer work, which can pay anywhere from \$75 to \$150 an hour, as Heaven's Gate apparently did.

But strip away the melding of cyberspace and outer space, and "they operate really in the same way (as other cults) — that we're living at the end of time and, somehow, they have the only opportunity to hop on the bandwagon and go on to a new plane;" said Marcia Rudin of the International Cult Education Program in New York.

They called each other brother and sister, dressed alike, took on strange-sounding names and lived strictly regimented lives in relative seclusion. All are elements variously cited in descriptions of cultlike behavior.

As details of Wednesday's mass suicide began to unfold yesterday, the similarities were striking between Heaven's Gate and the HIM group that Applewhite and Nettles founded more than two decades

■ Sheriff's investigators referred to the leader of the Rancho Santa Fe group as "Do." Applewhite had been called Do for several years.

The group's namesake Web site, Heaven's Gate, speaks repeatedly of "The Next Evolutionary Level" and "The Level Above Human." Applewhite and Nettles used the same phrases.

■ The Heaven's Gate Web site says the movement started 22 years ago. That's also when Applewhite and Nettles began making their public appearances.

■ And the Heaven's Gate site refers often to the teachings of two leaders they call Ti and Do — including one essay that was written by Do

Do's article, titled "Last Chance to Evacuate Earth Before It's Recycled," was dated Sept. 29, 1996. "This planet is about to be recycled, refurbished, started over," wrote Do, who spoke of humans moving out of their bodies for another world — a "Kingdom Level."

Many of the essays on the Web site were written by followers, or students, whose names end in the letters "ody." In one of these articles, a student called Jwnody writes of an Admiral and his Captain who came from the Evolutionary Level Above Human, inhabited human bodies and then, 22 years ago, began assembling a crew.

Outlined in the Web site writings is a self-styled, extraterrestrial theology, a spirituality that is a cosmic blend of quasi-Christianity, New Age mysticism and UFOs. The writings, most of them from previous years, are filled with the anticipation of going to a greater place.

Cult experts suggest that when the comet Hale-Bopp arrived on the horizon this year, a celestial escape hatch was opened for this anticipation to be fulfilled.

"The idea is that there is a planet four times bigger than the Earth traveling on its own course near the comet," said Hank Hanegraaff, president of the the Christian Research Institute, an evangelical countercult group in Orange County. "And because it's in the wake of the comet, it hasn't been detected on a large-scale basis."

Hanegraaff's explanation is echoed on Heaven's Gate Web site. They were, it says, "happily prepared to leave 'this world' and go with Ti's crew."

Ti, it seems, was coming back to Earth to get them.

A videotape sent to a minister in Michigan, and aired on a Toledo, Ohio, television station yesterday, showed an upbeat female follower who recounted meeting Ti and Do 22 years ago. "They are just not from this world," she said.

The woman dismissed accounts that she and the others were weak-minded people being manipulated by a charismatic leader. She also said that to move to the "level above," they had to become "what humans call dead."

The group made several public recruiting pitches in the early 1990s, including producing a videotape and a book, which most recently was distributed from an address in Phoenix, which turns out to be a box at a private mailbox business.

In one of those appearances, at the University of Illinois in 1994, five followers said that the "vessel called Peep" had died and her partner, called Do, was keeping a low profile while gathering people for the spacecraft, according to an account in the Chicago Tribune.

That this mass suicide discovery came during Holy Week, the most sacred days of the Christian year, is perhaps a double hardship for people of faith.

"I think that for many people who are already negative about religion and spirituality, this only supports their feeling that religion is the opiate of the people and there is nothing positive about it," said an obviously upset Bishop George McKinney of St. Stephen's Church of God in Christ in San Diego.

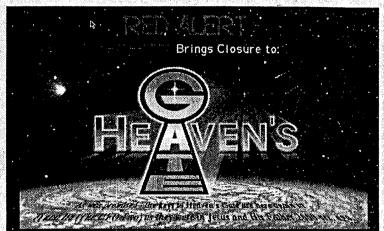
The victims were found under triangular shrouds of purple, a ceremonial color of this Lenten season.

Today, Christians observe Good Friday, the day of Jesus' crucifixion. The ceremonial color will be black, the symbol of mourning.

Staff writers Jim Okerblom; Joe Cantlupe, Sharon L. Jones, James Crawley and Rex Dalton contributed to this report.

Heaven's Gate

The group known as Heaven's Gate presented its beliefs on the World Wide Web. The opening page of their Web Site flashed "Red Alert" over their logo and talked of their joy at the presence of the Hale-Bopp comet.



The following are excerpts:

Hale-Bopp brings closure to Heaven's Gate

■ "Whether Hale-Bopp has a companion' or not is irrelevant from our perspective. However, its arrival is joyously very significant to us at 'Heaven's Gate.' The joy is that our Older Member in the Evolutionary Level Above Human (the 'Kingdom of Heaven') has made it clear to us that Hale-Bopp's approach is the 'marker' we've been waiting for -the time for the arrival of the spacecraft from the Level Above Human to take us home to 'Their World' in the literal Heavens. Our 22 years of classroom here on planet Earth is finally coming to conclusion -'graduation' from the Human Evolutionary Level. We are happily prepared to leave 'this world' and go with Ti's crew.

Our position against suicide

- "We know that it is only while we are in these physical vehicles (bodies) that we can learn the lessons needed to complete our own individual transition, as well as to complete our task of offering the Kingdom of Heaven to this civilization one last time
- "We fully desire, expect and look

forward to boarding a spacecraft from the Next Level very soon (in our physical bodies). There is no doubt in our mind that our being 'picked up' is inevitable in the very near future

- "It could happen that before that spacecraft comes, one or more of us could lose our physical vehicles (bodies) due to 'recall,' accident or at the hands of some Irate Individual.... Another possibility is that, because of the position we take in our information, we could find so much disfavor with the powers that control this world that there would be attempts to incarcerate us or to subject us to some sort of psychological or physical torture (such as occurred at both Ruby Ridge and Waco)."
- "The true meaning of 'suicide' is to turn against the Next Level when it is being offered. In those last days, we are focused on two primary tasks: one of making a last attempt at telling the truth about how the Next Level may be entered (our last effort at offering to individuals of this civilization the way to avoid 'suicide'); and two taking advantage of the rare opportunity we have each day to work Individually on our personal overcoming and change, in preparation for entering the Kingdom of Heaven."

THE DISCOVERY

Package to office alerts ex-member to the fate of cult

By Norma Meyer, COPLEY NEWS SERVICE

BEVERLY HILLS — It was a routine-looking Federal Express package, delivered to a high-rise office building just a few blocks from tony Rodeo Drive. Perhaps the only clue that something was amiss was its return address — InterAct Entertainment Group — the same place it was sent.

The addressee, Rio DiAngelo, a Web site designer at the firm and a former member of the Heaven's Gate cult, took the parcel home Tuesday night without saying a word. On Wednesday morning, he appeared in the office of the company's president, Nick Matzorkis, and made a chilling announcement that would lead the two to discover 39 bodies some 100 miles away.

"He informed me that the entire Higher Source crew. had committed suicide," Matzorkis said, recalling that DiAngelo showed him the Federal Express package containing two videos and a note from the group. "The letter said, 'By the time this is being read, we will have shed our containers,' which is how they refer to their bodies."

Two hours later, before notifying authorities about a

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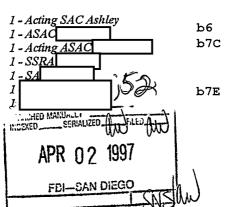
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Discovery

Production of movie was discussed

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possible mass suicide, Matzorkis sat in his Lexus sports-utility vehicle while DiAngelo entered a Rancho Santa Fe mansion to check on his former friends. "He went and saw every dead body," Matzorkis said. "He knew whose bed was whose."

The dead had purple shrouds over their heads and wore brand-new black Nike sneakers, with the white swoosh symbol on the side. "They went out and got—those tennis shoes for this purpose, for whenever they would decide to leave this planet," Matzorkis said.

DiAngelo, a shaven-head man in his early 40s, was hidden away somewhere yesterday, on Matzorkis' advice. And Matzorkis, 34 — co-owner of (800)U.S. Search, a lost-relative location service that has been featured on the television talk show "Leeza"; former founder of the cartoon syndicate "Ziggy and Friends Production"; and producer of a Madonna CD — was clearly relishing his new-found fame.

In an office adorned with covers of the entertainment trade papers, Variety and the Hollywood Reporter, Matzorkis said that about 16 members of the cult had done free-lance work for him on the Internet during the past eight months. Computer whizzes and clean-cut, they were androgynous, wore buzz cuts, dressed in cotton clothes and talked about leaving

Earth on a UFO that would trail the Hale-Bopp comet. One female member said the men, who like all followers were celibate, had their testicles removed, Matzorkis said.

The cult had even approached Matzorkis about producing a television movie of the week that would chronicle the group's history from its inception 20 years ago as the "UFO Cult," he said.

Matzorkis said he never read

Matzorkis said he never read the script he was given, but deemed the project unrealistic.



Nick Matzorkis

Now, says Matzorkis, he thinks the group selected him to be some type of after-life spokesman. On his computer, he pulled up a cryptic E-mail letter, dated Sept. 26, 1996, and signed, "Thanks, Higher Source Crew."

"Nick," it began, "When we met you last month we told you just a bit about our monastery, but as you probably suspected, the unsaid picture was a whole lot bigger than what was said."

After mentioning that the group was at "extremely critical crossroads," and thinking about going more public, the letter continued: "For some reason, we do tend to wonder if there is a greater purpose than our doing Web sites for you that put us in contact with each other. But of course, that is yet to be determined."

Matzorkis stopped reading, and shook his head. "I think that is determined right now," he said.

Two minutes after DiAngelo told him about the

Federal Express package Wednesday, Matzorkis said Beverly Hills police. Then, fearing the calls weren't the two were en route to the suicide scene. The businessman said he didn't call police because "I thought that there were truths and probably untruths."

"I thought maybe suicide to them is we go to the house and find that there's no one there and they're beamed up," he said. "In all actuality, they're living in

Europe."

But after talking with his employee on the drive down to Rancho Santa Fe, Matzorkis said he felt a sense of dread. One of the videos featured the cult leader "Do," speaking about how the members' spirits would transcend space. On the other tape, pairs of followers spoke spontaneously and "about how excited they were to be ridding their faults and moving on."

When they pulled up to the Mediterranean-style estate, Matzorkis said he told DiAngelo he would pick him up in 10 minutes. He drove down the block and back, then sat in the car in the driveway for three

minutes before DiAngelo emerged, he said.

"He looked white as a sheet as he approached the truck and he got in the car," Matzorkis recalled. "He said, 'They did it.'"

Matzorkis said he asked what they had done, and DiAngelo replied, "They all committed suicide." "He said they're lying in their beds, in cots, peacefully.".

Matzorkis said he persuaded DiAngelo to immediately make an anonymous call to local authorities from a pay phone. He said DiAngelo did that, telling the Sheriff's Department "40 people are dead in this

he had DiAngelo make a similar anonymous call to the this report.

taken seriously, Matzorkis in midafternoon said he called the San Diego Sheriff's Department and the Beverly Hills police, explaining he had driven an employee and former cult member down to make the grisly find. Sheriff's deputies discovered the bodies just after 4 p.m.

DiAngelo, who left the cult about five weeks ago, now believes he was spared to carry on some sort of message, Matzorkis said. Shortly after finding his one-time comrades dead from a drug and alcohol mixture, the computer programmer declared, "being chosen for this is not an easy task," Matzorkis said.

The man who played a key role in uncovering one of the worst mass suicides in U.S. history, however, was nowhere to be found yesterday. Phone listings and voting and property records didn't turn up DiAngelo's name, and although the building manager said people had been in Matzorkis' Beverly Hills penthouse, no one answered the door.

Matzorkis, meanwhile, kept busy with one interview after another. "Nick to the set!" shouted a publicist, interrupting an interview so Matzorkis could zip over to ABC-TV to chat with Peter Jennings.

As for DiAngelo, Matzorkis said he felt his employee wasn't ready yet to handle the publicity. "I felt that he might be disappointed in the end result. He was fearful that people would just glom on to what seems to be the insanity of it."

When the two returned to his offices, Matzorkis said Copley News Service reporter Hildy Medina contributed to

Therapists tell parents how to help kids cope with suicides

By Maria C. Hunt STAFF WRITER

Local therapists say parents can help their children cope with news of the bizarre mass suicide in Rancho Santa Fe by listening to their concerns and calmly giving each child only as much information as he or she wants.

Then as awareness of the obscure cult grows, parents of older children can use it as an opportunity to talk about cults, suicide and compassion for others.

Children will have different reactions based on their ages, maturity level and personalities. Rather than overwhelming a child with a long or detailed discussion, parents need to gauge what information or reassurance the child needs, and then provide it.

And if children do ask what happened, parents should explain it simply and matter-of-factly, said Dumont Blankenship, a clinical psychologist who lives in San Diego.

"If they ask why, I would probably tell them that this group of people believed that if they died they were going to join an alien space ship," he said. "I would indicate that I thought it was sad that people would take their own life and stress the positives about being alive." Some younger children may be much less affected by the deaths than adults expect, Blankenship said. Until children reach age 8 or 9, he said, the events may seem more like a television movie than life.

Dr. Steven Sparta, a clinical professor of psychiatry at UCSD, said the way parents talk to their children is just as important as what they say.

"Children will derive much of their interpretation of this through how their parents seem to be dealing with it," said Sparta, director of psychiatry training at Children's Hospital: "For example, if a parent is anxious when discussing this, the odds are the child will internalize anxiety."

Patricia Wojdowski, a licensed clinical social worker with Kaiser Permanente Hospital, said parents can help children feel secure by distancing them from the grisly events in the Rancho Santa Fe mansion.

"You might explain that our (family's) church doesn't believe in things like that or that those people were strange and not like us," she said. "What you're doing is helping the child build healthy defense mechanisms."

After dealing with initial reactions, parents of adolescents may find an opening to discuss group and cult behavior, and what makes people vulnerable to destructive ideas. Such topics are appropriate for adolescents, who are beginning to seek their own identity in a peer group.

"It can be used as a teaching tool in that following the crowd is not such a good idea, and we have to make our individual decisions and keep our values intact so we aren't swept along," Wojdowski said.

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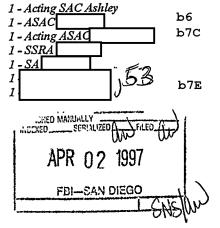
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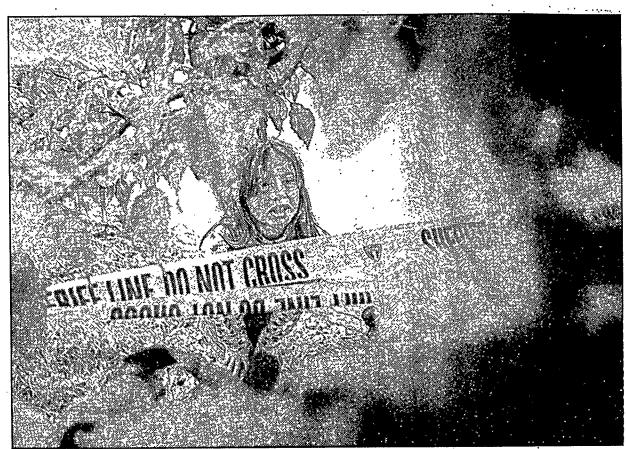
"Therapists tell parents how to help kids cope with suicides"

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HOWARD LIPIN/Union-Tribun

Child's view: Eight-year-old Victoria Doroski, who lives next door to the house where 39 people were found dead, peers across sheriff's lines outside the residence. Therapists say parents should try to gauge what information or reassurance their child needs, and then provide it.

"... if a parent is anxious when discussing this, the odds are the child will internalize anxiety."

Dr. Steven Sparta, a clinical professor of psychiatry at UČSD

Cult Experts Try to Ease Anxieties, Illuminate Issues

By KENNETH R. WEISS and DUKE HELFAND TIMES STAFF WRITERS

In New York, cult expert Marcia Rudin got more calls than she could possibly answer, forcing her to turn away anxious parents whose children had slipped deep into mysterious sects.

In Los Angeles, Debbie Pine dashed from one television interview to another, laying out the warning signs of cult affiliation for a suddenly attentive public.

In Alabama, Craig Branch and his staff of three were so overwhelmed by the surging interest in cults that he wished for "air traffic controllers" to direct the onslaught of inquiries.

Used to toiling in obscurity, anticult warriors across the country are seizing the national spotlight in the aftermath of the mass suicides in San Diego County. For them, the deaths in Rancho Santa Fe present the biggest opportunity since Waco.

Although the deaths of the 39 Heaven's Gate members deeply troubled these activists, they welcomed the chance to reinvigorate what is otherwise a low-profile trench war, saving one cult member at a time.

"We've been screaming about this for years," said Rudin, director of the International Cult Education Program. "Unfortunately, the world does not pay attention until there are deaths involved."

These activists—some of whom operate out of their homes with just a telephone and fax machine or computer—know they have to strike now because their moment in the spotlight might be all too brief. If the reaction to the 1993 deaths of 80 Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas, was any guide, they Please see CULTS, A16

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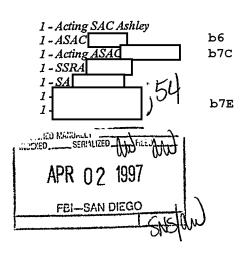
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expect the phone calls to taper off within a month.

That leaves little time to mount campaigns that they hope will attract new volunteers and desperately needed donations for scattered, poorly financed organizations often ridiculed by their targets as alarmist.

The anti-cult organizations say they are usually contacted by panicked family members after a relative or a friend has joined a suspicious group and begun to pull away from those close to them. Their primary job in such cases is to provide information and emotional support to distraught callers.

But unlike most weeks, the steady trickle of calls has turned into a torrent.

For Branch, southeast regional director of the evangelical Christian Watchmen Fellowship, a Texasbased organization with offices in six states, the deluge:

began at 6 on the morning after the suicides were discovered.

"I was just getting out of bed," he said. "My wife handed me the phone and said, 'It started.' And it had."

For most of the groups, the first wave of calls came largely from the media. And many of the counter-cult experts like Pine pounced on the chance to reach a mass audience rather than counseling individuals, one on one.

Pine, director of the Maynard Bernstein Resource Center on Cults, began Friday with an appearance on a local television morning news show.

Speaking earnestly into the camera, Pine ticked off the

signs of cult behavior—a person distancing himself from loved ones, acting secretive and offering vague answers to questions about their activities.

"They always ask me the same question: My brother or sister is involved in this group. Is it a cult?" Pine said. "I encourage them to be very supportive, not to be afraid, to plant seeds of doubt about the group but to do it in a respectful way."

Rudin of the International Cult Education Program spent Friday with a telephone glued to her ear. By early afternoon, she had stacks of messages to return, and the answering machine had run out of tape. Some callers wanted guidance to reclaim their relatives from sects they had joined, and others simply wanted the most basic information, such as what constitutes a cult. Even ex-cult members were calling, their emotional wounds ripped open by the grisly images from Rancho Sante Fe.

'We've been screaming about this for years.
Unfortunately,

Unfortunately, the world does not pay attention until there are deaths

> MARCIA RUDIN Cult expert

involved.'

1

"They've been re-traumatized by the shock that this could have happened to them," Rudin said. "It brings back their anxiety."

Rudin scrambled to keep pace with the barrage of calls from reporters and members of the public, telling some anxious families to call back next week.

"People are suddenly re-panicked about cults," said Rudin, whose program is affiliated with the American Family Foundation, a secular, research-oriented organization based in New York and Bonita Springs, Fla. "I haven't been able to handle them all."

UCLA psychiatrist Louis J. West, an outspoken cult critic, said counter-cult groups like Rudin's are struggling to keep their doors open.

"The most important national group, the Cult Awareness Network, has been destroyed," he said. "They were targeted and sued and forced out of business."

The Chicago-based organization, beset by a barrage of lawsuits by the Church of Scientology, was forced into bankruptcy last year. Its name, logo, post office box and telephone number were sold to the highest bidder: a Los Angeles lawyer and member of the Church of Scientology, who licensed the network to a foundation with ties to the church.

David J. Bardin, an attorney who is appealing the bankruptcy sale on behalf of former network executives, said he is outraged that people affiliated with the Church of Scientology are now operating its hotline and delivering what he called a skewed message.

:/

"This . . . causes confusion to the public," Bardin said.

An officer of the reconstituted network disputed the characterization, saying the current staff delivers factual information without anti-cult "hysteria."

"We felt that the old Cult Awareness Network was an equal-opportunity hate group," said Nancy O'Meara, the group's treasurer, who described herself as a Scientologist. Those now answering the phones, she said offer advice rather than the perspective of "one person who had a bad experience with one group and created a hysteria for all religious groups."

The mass suicides also reignited a related debate, among scholars and other experts as to what exactly constitutes a cult, or even if the word is unfairly pejorative. On the conservative evangelical side of the spectrum, some still label the Mormon Church and Christian Science as cults, while many others consider them legitimate religions.

One leading sociologist of religion criticized anticultists for spreading what he called fear and misstatements in the wake of the Rancho Santa Fe suicides.

hat we need to say is that 99.9% [of cults] are benign and these unfounded generalizations are ridiculous," said Stuart Wright, editor of "Armageddon in Waco" and spokesman for the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and the Religious Research Assn. "I've seen a parade of so-called experts on the major TV networks, and not a single one is what I would consider a neutral scholar who has expertise in this area."

But one anti-cult educator said that even the most seemingly benign groups can pose a threat to those seekers who allow others to control their lives and even determine their fate.

"Any type of group where the leader is charismatic and has total authority over members is dangerous," said Corey Slavin, 33, a one-time cult member and the former director of the Maynard Bernstein Cult Resource Center in Los Angeles. "If you compare them to God, then that is a cult and that is destructive."

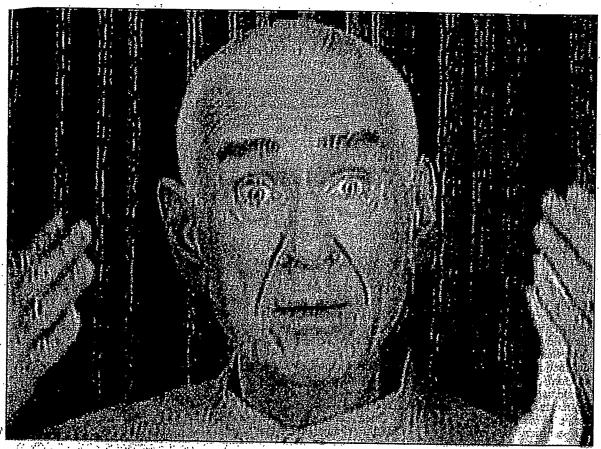
Jonathan Rosman, a forensic psychiatrist in Pasadena who has treated former cult members, said that a surprisingly large pool of people can be susceptible to subtle recruitment from warm, friendly people who are slow to reveal their true agendas.

"People have a sense of invulnerability when it comes to cults—'I'm not crazy and I'm not going to be influenced by them,' Rosman said. "But these are very sophisticated groups with very sophisticated means to wheedle themselves into people's lives."

Counter-cult activists, who have frequently been sued and harassed for their views, saw a measure of vindication in the fact that a charismatic leader apparently persuaded 38 followers to take their own lives.

"When an event like this happens, it helps the nation see that we are not crying Chicken Little," said James Walker, president of the Watchmen Fellowship. "These groups can be dangerous, psychologically and spiritually, even when they don't commit suicide, because the power and influence is still in place."

CULTS: Experts See Chance to Educate Public



Associated Press



Hermann Hospital Archives

Heaven's Gate leader Marshall Applewhite, above in undated videotape, founded the group more than two decades ago with Bonnie Lu Trusdale Nettles, left, in photo from 1946 nursing school yearbook. She died several years ago.

As Families Grieve, a Portrait Emerges of Cult's Final Days

■ Tragedy: Members prepared for trip, held a last supper at a restaurant. Some had given up their jobs, cut off spouses or abandoned children to pursue nomadic life.

By JOHN M. GLIONNA, ALAN ABRAHAMSON and TONY PERRY TIMES STAFF WRITERS

Grieving families around the nation began Friday to plan funerals for relatives they had long ago lost to the Heaven's Gate cult, which promised disciples they could evolve into extraterrestrials by severing all links to modern society and human desires.

As authorites identified the cult members who committed mass suicide, friends and relatives said some had cast away well-paying jobs, cut off spouses or abandoned children to join Heaven's Gate in a vagabond lifestyle that demanded communal living, periodic fasting and a disdain for mainstream culture

Medical examiners working around the clock confirmed that the 39 cult members died after ingesting the anti-seizure drug phenobarbital and drinking alcohol. But at least a few of the victims did not have lethal levels of phenobarbital in their blood; these may have died from suffocation, as they had apparently placed plastic bags over their heads, authorities said.

Several of the male cult mem² bers had been castrated long before the suicides—in keeping with their belief that in order to ascend to the next level, they needed not only to remain celibate but to prove they had no need for reproductive organs.

As autopsies continued, investigators emphasized that they saw no indication of murder—and no hint that any cult members survived the mass suicide in Rancho Santa Fe.

The 39 victims seemed to be the only active members of the Heaven's Gate cult. The group had no other chapters despite grand dreams of expanding overseas, said San Diego County Sheriff's Lt. Jerry Lipscomb.

"We cannot tie this group to any

other one in the world," Lipscomb said.

Founded more than two decades ago by nurse Bonnie Lu Trusdale Nettles, who died several years Please see SUICIDE, A17 Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A1 Los Angeles Times Los Angeles, CA

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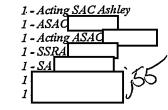
"As Families Grieve, a Portrait Emerges of Cult's Final Days"

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UICIDE: Cultists Had Lon

go Lost Touch With Families

Continued from A1

ago, and former music teacher Marshall Applewhite, who died in the mass suicide, the group attracted all types of members, of all ages and races.

A career postal worker abandoned five children to join the cult after catching word of it on the Internet. A troubled teenager ran away from home to sign up after hearing members lecture in a neighborhood park. The members included the daughter of a retired federal judge and the son of a major telecommunications executive.

The brother of "Star Trek" star Nichelle Nichols, who played Lt. Uhura, joined too, immersing himself in a mystical theology that offered believers the chance to cast off their clunky earth-bodies and transform into extraterrestrial angels ascending into a "Kingdom of Heaven."

About two dozen of the cult members appeared to have joined the group in the mid-1970s and stuck with it until its final act.

A Final Meal, Together

hough they isolated themselves from friends and family, the cult members were far from hermits. They watched "Star Trek," breakfasted on strawberry crepes at a local pancake house and boldly knocked on the doors of some of San Diego's toniest businesses looking for work designing World Wide Web sites.

And a week ago Friday—just a day or so before enacting their meticulously planned suicides—the cult went out for a last supper together at the Marie Callender's restaurant in Carlsbad, dining on turkey pot pies and squeezing extra lemons into their iced teas.

But they indulged in these activities only with the fellow cult members they called "brothers" and "sisters." Meanwhile, their true relatives fretted and feared, baffled by the ideology that had snatched them from mainstream society. "He just dropped out," Steven Stevens, the manager for actress Nichols, said of cult member Thomas Nichols.

Those outside Heaven's Gate had no way of reaching their loved ones on the inside. And those in the cult made little effort to reassure

Yvonne McCurdy-Hill, for example, made just one 10-second phone call to her mother after joining the cult last summer. A postal supervisor in Cincinnati, McCurdy-Hill abandoned her family shortly after she gave birth to twin girls. She also had three sons, said the Rev. H.L. Harvey, a family friend and pastor at the New Friendship Baptist Church.

"Her brothers and family were concernéd about where she was and what she was doing," Harvey said. "She was a whiz on the computer, but then she started acting strange and studying this religion."

Another member, David Geoffrey Moore, visited his mother just twice in the 21 years since he linked up with the cult near San

Moore's most recent employer, Mike Afshin, described him as a skilled computer consultant, a man so honest and friendly that he once fixed a client's plumbing for free because he felt guilty about charg-

ing her \$79 for a service job that took just 10 minutes to complete. But Moore's mother, Nancie Brown, had no such memories to cling to as she grieved. She had not been in regular contact with her son since he was in high school.

Similarly, Applewhite's sister, Louise Winant, said she had not heard from him in more than 20 years-and added that he did not even know he had grandchildren.

Joining Applewhite's group meant adopting a nomadic life. The group moved often, from state to state. Until June, they had lived in New Mexico, occupying a 40-acre compound in the Manzano Mountains about 50 miles southeast of Albuquerque.

Last summer, the group moved to San Diego County, renting a low-slung modern home on Camino de Estrellas, or Street of Stars, just east of Rancho Santa Fe.

A neighbor, Anthony Demopoulos, recalled the Heaven's Gate members as "so spacey, when you talked to them, it was like talking to a wall or something." The group stayed there just a few months before moving into the milliondollar mansion in Rancho Santa Fe where they died.

New Names, Masked Movements

o go with their nomadic life style, the cult members adopted new names, all with three letters. And they systematically masked their movements, registering their Web sites and driver's licenses under bogus addresses and aliases.

Many of those with New Mexico licenses listed addresses that turned out to be churches or businesses—or outright fictions.

"It's as if a lot of these people wanted to wash their identities," said Rob Perry, an official with the New Mexico State Police.

Despite the difficulties, San Diego authorities managed to track down relatives of at least 35 of the victims. Calvin Vine, who supervised the notification process for the medical examiner's office, said most of the relatives started sobbing upon hearing the news—even

though some had long predicted that the cult would end up carrying out a mass suicide.

"Most of the families are breaking down when we talk to them," Vine said.

A few of the families learned of the deaths from watching television broadcasts of the cult's farewell tape.

Local investigators have asked the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the state attorney general's office for help in searching the cult's computers and tracking down hard-to-find relatives.

"There's some t's to cross and some i's to dot," Lt. Lipscomb said. "But at this point, we feel that this is what it appears to be: death by overdose and suffocation, self-inflicted. Thirty-nine suicides."

San Diego County Undersheriff Jack Drown said his team still hopes to find out how and where the cult obtained so much phenobarbital. A prescription drug available in generic as well as brandname medications, it is commonly prescribed for seizure disorders.

Investigators found several syringes in the room where the last two cult members committed suicide. They also found a cup with a liquid thought to be phenobarbital. But they have not determined whether the cult members took the drug in liquid or powder form, and the bodies were too badly decayed to detect any signs of injections.

The autopsies did reveal the castrations, which San Diego County Medical Examiner Brian Blackbourne said had been performed so long ago that all the scars had healed. Applewhite, the group's leader, was among those castrated, apparently in conformance with his ideology.

The Heaven's Gate teachings instruct followers to neuter their "vehicles," or bodies, if they hope to transform into extraterrestrial bodies and hitch a UFO ride into the astral bliss he called the Kingdom of Heaven. One of the group's Internet communiques said: "It seems you could not inherit one of those [more advanced] bodies until you no longer have any use for activities involving the reproductive organs."

The cult had decorated its Rancho Santa Fe mansion with several pictures of the type of higher-level beings they hoped to become. One wore a black hat decorated with the same figure to his death bed. "It was just like you see on the 'X-Files,'" Blackbourne said.

In addition to the castrations, the group affected an androgynous look. Both women and men kept their hair cropped close, and all members routinely wore baggy oversized shirts, which they did not tuck in.

Their appearance drew the attention of Chris Turner, the general manager of the Marie Callender's restaurant in Carlsbad, about 15 miles from Rancho Santa Fe. He said all 39 members of the group came in about 2 p.m. March 21, a day or so before authorities think the first suicides took place.

'Odd,' but 'Very Nice'

ach member wore a different colored, long-sleeve, button-down shirt and pants. And they insisted that one particular table be served first. "We thought it was odd. . . . But they were very nice. They didn't act weird. We just assumed they were from the same religious group," said 21-year-old waitress Alisa Bunnell, who served the group.

Turner said the group stayed at the restaurant for less than 45 minutes and payed the \$350 bill in cash. "I thought they were all cancer victims," he said. "I thought it was kind of a sad scene."

Heaven's Gate members had apparently been planning their suicide for some time. One recently gave a medallion with a picture of an alien to a friend at a local car wash, and told him he would be going away on a trip.

Three members who worked as computer consultants for the Arrowhead Group insurance company in San Diego left their jobs last month, though they were offered additional work, because they said they had to prepare for a trip.

"They were happy and excited about what they were about to do," said Arrowhead manager Steve

As the medical examiner's staff

scrambled to finish the autopsies, two sheriff's deputies came forward at a news conference Friday to talk about the shock and horror

Contributing to The Times' coverage of the deaths in Rancho Santa Fe were Times staff writers John Dart, Tina Daunt, Ralph Frammolino, Jesse Katz, Maria La Ganga, James Rainey, Louis Sahagun, Stephanie Simon, Hector Tobar and Jenifer Warren and researchers John Beckham, Jacci Cenacveira, Julia Franco, Janet Lundblad, Maloy Moore, Terry Peterson, Cary Schneider, Steve Tice and Nona Yates.

of finding the 39 bodies decomposing under purple shrouds.

Deputy Robert Brunk said he knew something was horribly wrong when he approached an open side door to the house in response to two calls tipping authorities to a mass suicide.

"I noticed an odor that in my past experience has been associated with death," Brunk said. "Once you get that smell . . . it doesn't ever leave your head."

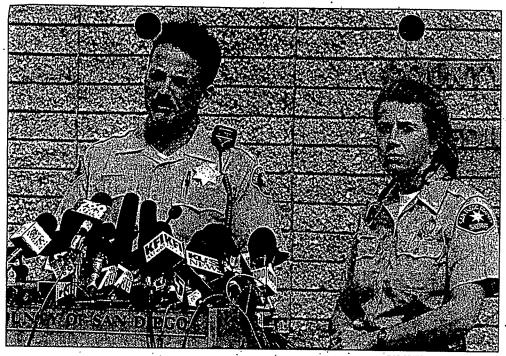
Brunk called for backup and Deputy Laura Gacek drove up a few minutes later. "She walked up to the door, smelled the same odor and confirmed what I had been thinking deep down inside—that yeah, this is for real," Brunk said.

Afraid of poison gas, the two deputies retreated and sent out a bulletin on their scanner indicating they had come across at least 10 corpses in an apparent mass suicide.

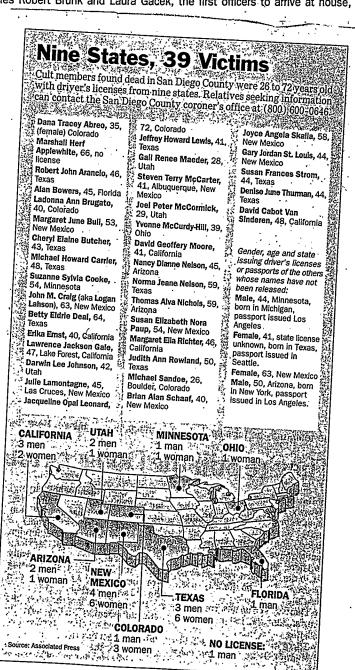
Indeed, the worldwide media attention has been so intense that astronomer Alan Hale, a co-discoverer of the comet that Heaven's Gate members thought was shielding the UFO that would take them to their home star, felt compelled to hold a news conference Friday afternoon.

"Almost from day one, I have heard claims that Hale-Bopp is an alien mother ship or is under intelligent control or some such. . . And now, this has been carried to an extreme. Thirty-nine people have now lost their lives as a result of this ignorance and superstition," said Hale, an astronomer with the Southwest Institute for Space Research.

"Tonight . . . forget about the world for a minute, go outside, look up in the northwest and take a look at this comet. It's a beautiful object. It's lovely. It's one of the most magnificent celestial objects you will ever see. But for all its beauty, its magnificence, its splendor, all it is is a dirty snowball that's orbiting the sun," Hale said. "Nothing more."



Deputies Robert Brunk and Laura Gacek, the first officers to arrive at house, speak to news media.



The cult suicide victims

hir ty-nine people, 21 women and 18 men found dead after a mass suicide, were 26 to 72 years old with driver's licenses from nine states.

Relatives seeking information can contact the San Diego County coroner's office at 800-600-0646.

Names of dead whose families have been notified:



Dana Tracey Abreo 35, Denver, Colo.



Marshall Herff Applewhite 66, no license

Robert John Arancio 46, Dallas, Texas

Raymond Alan Bowers 45, Jupiter, Fla Jeffrey Howard Lewis 41, San Antonio, Texas

Gail Renee Maeder 28, Salt Lake City, Utah

Steven Terry McCarter 41, Albuquerque N.M.



Joel Peter McCormick 29, Salt Lake City, Utah



Yvonne McCurdy-Hill 39; Cincinnati, Ohio

David Geoffery Moore 41, Los Gatos, Calif.

Nancy Dianne Nelson 45, Mesa, Ariz

Norma Jeane Nelson 59, Dallas, Texas

Thomas Alva Nichols 59, Arizona

Susan Elizabeth Nora Paup 54, New Mexico Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

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"The cult suicide victims"

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Ladonna Ann Brugato 40, Englewood, Colo.

Margaret June Bull, 3, Ellensburg, Wash

Cheryl Elaine Butcher 43, Dallas, Texas

Michael Howard Carrier 48, Richardson, Texas

Suzanne Sylvia Cooke 54, New Mexico

John M. Craig (aka Logan Lahson) 63, Durango, Colo.

Betty Eldrie Deal 64. Dallas, Texas



Erika Ernst 40. California

Lawrence Jackson Gale 47, Lake Forest, Calif.

Darwin Lee Johnson 42, Orem, Utah

Julie Lamontagne, 45, Las Cruces, N.M., born in Massachusetts, passport issued in Los Angeles



Jacqueline Opal Leonard 72, Littleton, Colo.



Margaret Ela Richter 46. California

Judith Ann Rowland 50, Dallas and Albuquerque N.M., licenses

Michael Sandoe 26, Boulder, Colo. born in Virginia, passport issued in Washington, D.C

> Brian Alan Schaaf 40, New Mexico

Joyce Angela Skalla 58, New Mexico

Gary Jordan St. Louis 4, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

Susan Frances Strom 44, McKinney, Texas

Denise June Thurman 44. Austin, Texas



David Cabot Van Sinderen 48. California

Other victims, whose names have not been released:

Male, 44, Minnesota born in Michigan, passport issued in Los Angeles

Female, 41, state license unknown, born in Texas, passport issued in Seattle.

Female, 63, Albuquerque, N.M.

Male, 50, Arizona license, born in New York, passport issued in Los Angeles.



LAURA EMBRY/Union Tribune

Dr. Brian Blackbourne, county medical examiner, handed a list of victims' names to an FBI official yesterday morning.

MOUNT CLIPPING IN SPACE BELOW

Cult's bizarre lifestyle revealed

6 members of Heaven's Gate were castrated, autopsies find

By Kelly Thornton, Cheryl Clark, Lisa Petrillo and J. Harry Jones STAFF WRITERS

Members of the Heaven's Gate cult believed so strongly that physical pleasures impeded their spiritual journey that six of the 18 men had their testicles removed.

Medical examiners discovered the castrations during autopsies of the 39 cult members, who said on videotapes that their desire to rendezvous with a spaceship led each to drink poison. The bodies were discovered Wednesday in a Rancho Santa Fe mansion.

At a news conference yesterday, county Medical Examiner Brian Blackbourne said he had no idea why such unusual surgeries would be conducted. He said the professional-looking incisions on at least six bodies indicated the procedures were done long before the suicides.

Other details of the members' identities and lifestyle emerged yesterday, from their celibacy and computer proficiency to their abandonment of family and their thoughts about UFOs. They had portraits of bald, big-headed aliens hanging above the fireplace and elsewhere in the \$1 million-plus mansion.

The dead were 21 women and 18 men from several states. Among them was the brother of an original "Star Trek" cast member; a 72-year-old Iowa grandmother; and a mother who left a husband and five children — including a baby — to follow the cult.

Almost all of the 30 families notified by the Medical Examiner's Office so far said they had not seen or heard from cult members for years, and in some cases decades.

"We've been working around the clock trying to help families cope with the deaths," said Cal Vine, supervising medical examiner investigator, who said he had not slept for 70 hours when he faced reporters at a news conference.

"Most of the families that we talked to realized they were into cults and had not had any contact with them over the years," he said.

The separation did not lessen the relatives' anguish and grief, however. "Most of the families are break-

See CULT on Page A-13

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

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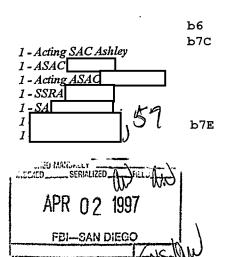
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"Cult's bizarre lifestyle revealed"

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Cult

First deputies at scene found it 'overwhelming'

Continued from A-1

ing down when we talk to them," Vine said.

Although relatives knew little about the activities of their loved ones, cult members had told acquaintances that leader Marshall Applewhite, 66, whose body was found alone in the second-floor master bedroom, preached celibacy as a means of denying the body physical pleasure because it is merely a disposable "container."

Local physicians said castration
— which make erections impossible — was one of the UFO-worshipping cult's greatest eccentricities.

Dr. John Greisman, a urologist and president-elect of the San Diego County Medical Society, said he had never heard of voluntary castration in the absence of serious medical conditions. Medically, he said, the only reason to perform the procedure would be to try to save a man with testicular or prostate cancer.

r; Adding to the mystery of motive is the question: Where would these edevotees have found a surgeon to castrate them?

- % "It would certainly not be any physician in the mainstream," - Greisman said. "I can't imagine eanyone would do this."

OPhysicians said the only reason for surgical castration other than to fight cancer would be to lower the sex drive, as has been done throughout history, from royal courts of Italy where the castratic were lifelong sopranos to the Middle East harem tenders to the politically potent eunuchs of the Chinese emperors.

En Dr. Daniel Smiley, a urologist at Kaiser Hospital, said male aggressiveness and sex drive are mostly tied to testosterone, which is supplied by the testicles. Once the testicles are removed, the male hormones that normally balance the female hormones in the male body lose their potency, Smiley said. "You would take on female characteristics because you would have unopposed estrogen."

-h Castrations also result in immediate side effects such as hot flashes and enlarged breasts. "It would reduce secondary male characteristics, lessen the beard growth, give them less body hair, they'd put on

eight and be a more placid individual," Smiley said.

The cult members' bodies had a similar androgynous look, with close haircuts, home-tailored pajamalike black shirts and pants, and new Nike sneakers. One man wore a black baseball cap with a picture of an alien head on it. The shirts had triangular shoulder patches of the Heaven's Gate emblem.

The two sheriff's deputies who were sent to check the welfare of residents at the house initially thought all the dead were male. They spoke publicly for the first time yesterday about what happened when they wandered tentatively, with dread and fear, room by room through the mansion.

They said they smelled death in the air, but not until they saw a roomful of bodies did the reality hit.

"You just don't know the magnitude," said Deputy Laura Gasek. "Seeing that many bodies in one room...."

They looked for such small signs of life as the rise and fall of a chest. They found none.

"It's an overwhelming experience," said Deputy Robert Brunk.
"The gamut of emotions I've felt over the last couple of days, it's hard to describe. I'm glad I have my girlfriend and family as a sounding board."

At one point inside the mansion, the deputies locked eyes. "It's almost like it wasn't real," Brunk said. "We looked at each other and just said, 'The world's gonna come down on us now.'"

There remain some unanswered questions for the pathologists trying to determine the precise causes of death.

There were handwritten "recipes" in the home, listing ingredients for a lethal concoction: applesauce, vodka and phenobarbital, a tranquilizing drug. But no vodka bottles were found. No containers of phenobarbital. No jars of applesauce.

There were dozens of small pudding cups in the trash, along with small, red plastic drinking glasses, Blackbourne said. He said pill bottles were found but the labels were torn off, removing any evidence of how they were obtained or who prescribed them.

Pathologists said a lethal dose of phenobarbital would require at least 50 tablets of the largest prescription dose, too much to fit into the tiny cups. Perhaps, Blackbourne said, they were able to obtain a purer supply of phenobarbital powder.

Blackbourne said a spiral binder found at the mansion included a

Where the bodies were

The locations of the 39 cult members bodies according to the Sheriff's Department:

- 27 bodies found on second floor

Balcony

A bodies

A bodies

Lectern

Compliter boms

Lectern

Limo garage

Kitchen

garage

Kitchen

garage

Car

garage

Ca

SOURCE: San Diego County Sheriff's Department

MARK NOWLIN / Union-Tribune

page describing a three-stage death plan: "Fifteen classmates, eight assistants, then 15 more and eight assistants, then help each other," he read.

The assistants apparently helped

others swallow the fatal mixture and put plastic bags over their heads, which were later removed. The bodies were laid on cots or mattresses, their arms at their sides. Diamond-shaped purple shrouds were found draped over all but two of the men.

The two had plastic bags over their heads, possibly because there was no one to clean up after them. They had been dead less than 24 hours, while the second group probably died two days before being discovered and the first wave died as much as four days earlier, most likely on Saturday, Blackbourne said.

Sheriff's officials, homicide detectives, criminalists and lab technicians met yesterday morning to plan the continuing investigation.

"We want to eliminate the possibility (of homicide) to the best of our ability, to make this exactly what it appears to be, and that's suicide," said sheriff's Lt. Gerald Lipscomb.

Lipscomb said investigators looked for evidence of criminal activity among the cult members.

"We've found nothing at all," he said. "Nothing even remotely suspicious."

Investigators plan to seek help from computer experts from the FBI and the Department of Justice to unravel what was left behind by cult members in the many computers inside the mansion.

There are murky aspects to the group's affairs. Its local business-name filings were filled out with bogus addresses. Its vehicles were registered to postal box addresses in New Mexico. Several members used aliases.

And background checks by the New Mexico Department of Public Safety of the nine members connected with that state showed that among their past addresses were three campgrounds, a motel, a trailer park and a church.

Lipscomb said detectives have learned the cult was nomadic, having lived briefly in Texas, Colorado and Oregon. They do not appear to be linked to any other cult, he said:

Staff writer Elizabeth Douglass contributed to this report.

MOUNT.CLIPPING IN SPACE BELOW

Cult had lived in N.M. isolation

By Philip J. LaVelle STAFF WRITER

MANZANO, N.M. — The Heaven's Gate cult lived a life of monastic isolation high in the hills above this lonely high plains hamlet, apparently preparing to ride out apocalyptic times behind the walls of a compound made from old tires, dirt and concrete.

The self-styled "earth ship" complex may have been the doomed cult's last residence in New Mexico before members began their fateful journey last year to San Diego County, where they took part in the largest mass suicide on U.S. soil.

"I think they felt they wanted to eliminate the outside world as much as possible," said Jim Thorsen, the leader of a New Mexico patriotmovement organization, who bought the 40-acre site from cult

members last April.

Thorsen, a 68-year-old retired contractor and leader of the New Mexico Citizens Action Association, said he met three cult members in July 1995, when he drove out to the site to inquire about buying it.

He was met at the compound's gate by a man called Roger Logan, identified as a leader of the cult, and by two other cult members. Thorsen said he was not permitted inside the compound.

"As soon as we showed up, they appeared ... they had the place well wired" for sound, he said.

Thorsen was told the group was not interested in selling the property.

See COMPOUND on Page A-11

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A-1 San Diego Union-Tribune San Diego, CA

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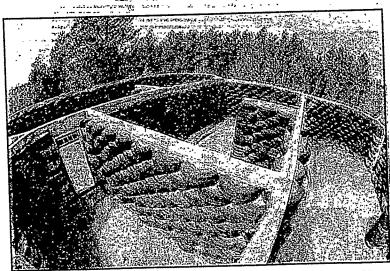
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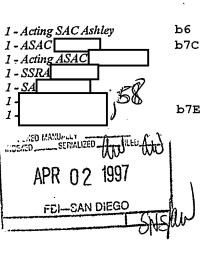
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SEAN M. HAFFEY / Union-Tribune

Compound: The Heaven's Gate cult constructed this structure out of old tires and concrete in Manzano, N.M.





Cult had isolated itself in New Mexico

Continued from A-1

"I told him, 'Look, if you're interested in selling it, give me a call,' "he said, adding that Logan said the group purchased the property in June 1995.

16 Logan called him by about March 1996, he said, to begin sale negotiations. Several meetings with Logan followed, with other cult members in attendance. Thorsen declined to disclose the eventual sale price.

Thorsen described Logan as "tall, priest-like," and said at first he thought the group was a spinoff of the Roman Catholic Church because a sign said the site was a monastery and because the people wore high-collared shirts.

Thorsen said he quickly realized the three people he met were not Catholics after discussing their beliefs.

""They did have a respect for the Bible and for Christ," he said, but with some bizarre twists.

"They had been in extensive study... they were patriots, conservative, extremely well-informed" and possessed of a firm belief in UFOs, he said.

Logan told Thorsen that the compound housed about 40 cult members who lived in two large Army surplus tents, he said. The other cult members had moved away by the time he had made several visits early last year, but he saw evidence, including deep depressions in the ground where the tents had stood, of a thriving community.

Colive-green steel supports from large tents lay on the grounds yesterday, as did roughly 20 metal bedposts. They were similar, perhaps, to the metal-framed bunk beds the cult members used in the Rancho Santa Fe mansion where they died. Many of those dead lay on bunk beds.

Look of a fortress

The compound that cult members left behind has a fortress-like look. A tall, unfinished wall, constructed of old tires filled with sand, is laid out in an irregular pattern on a smaller portion of the site.

"They believed that one of these days the government would be after people like them, and I tend to agree with them on that point," said Thorsen, an ardent believer in the

imminent takeover of the United States by the United Nations and other "One World Order" forces.

In addition to bracing for government oppression, Thorsen said, the cultists were preparing for a coming apocalypse.

The group left the compound half-finished. "It might have been that this guy Do (the leader of the cult, Marshall Applewhite) had had a revelation and decided to leave a little bit early," Thorsen said.

They had grand plans for the site, including a bakery, nursery, pharmacy, infirmary and living quarters for cult leadership.

The leadership's intended living quarters, roughly 3,700 square feet, consists of walls, made of tires filled with dirt, set upon a concrete slab that once was a tennis court. It has no roof, but Thorsen said he plans to add one.

Construction designs were taken from volumes titled "Earthship — How to Build Your Own," an instructional text with diagrams published by Solar Survival Press of Taos, N.M. Volumes were found at the site.

Another structure, a 4,000-square-foot metal building, contains construction material left behind by the group, including roughly 100 70-pound bags of cement, a gaspowered electric generator and power saws.

Hooks on the wall and cubicles attest to the group's Spartan life-style — Thorsen said that's where the cultists kept their personal belongings — and restrooms, one for men, one for women, each containing three industrial-looking showers, two toilets, sinks and simple cabinets.

The property also has underground facilities for water and fuel. Several wide plastic pipes, apparently for ventilation of these underground facilities, jut a few feet out of the ground.

Dropouts

"They'd all dropped out of society," Thorsen said. "They're not paying taxes."

He added that group members were earnest, well-read and "very industrious, hard-working."

"This is laborious," he said, hitting one of the compound's tire walls with his hand as his 4-year-old black Labrador retriever, Berry, lazily roamed the grounds, stopping occasionally to roll happily in the

Building the walls "was part of their discipline ... (but) not at all fruitful, as far as I'm concerned. I'm going to get rid of 'em."

Edgewood Compound' (41) cult sold last April Estancia Manzano (55) Willard Mountainair 10 miles JTAH COLORADO NEW MEXICO 🖸 Santa Fe Albuquerque Detail 60 360 MEXICO

FRED GATES / Union-Tribune

The walls, he explained, would certainly stop high-caliber rifle fire, but would be useless against small artillery, such as mortars.

Thorsen lives on the site in a double-wide trailer with his wife, Catherine, 68.

The couple found the cult members to be cordial. "As a matter of fact," he said, "they wanted Catherine and me to go with them. We said, no, we weren't interested in that."

In the mountains

The isolated property sits on the eastern slope of the Manzano range about three miles beneath the crest of Capilla Peak, a 9,368-foot promontory in the Cibola National Forest.

Capilla Peak is home to the University of New Mexico's Capilla Peak Observatory, visible from state Route 14, Manzano's main drag.

The Heaven's Gate compound is near the eastern boundary of the national forest, on rugged, arid land dotted with Ponderosa pine, cedar and scrub oak.

The surrounding region has become home in recent years to numerous New Age sects, religious cults and UFO enthusiasts, locals

Cult members believed that they would rendezvous, after their suicides, with a UFO trailing the Hale-

Bopp comet.

South of Manzano, in the small community of Mountainair, a radical preacher claims to have had an intense discussion last year with Logan on cult property.

Mike Dew, pastor of the Ministry of Salvation, which he described as a "prophesy-type ministry," said he met with Logan and three other cult members last year. The other members included a man Dew identified as Steele; a van registered in New Mexico to a man named Steele was found outside the Rancho Santa Fe mansion.

Dew claimed to have studied the cult since its emergence in the mid-1970s in Houston, and said its teachings were centered around the belief "that they were angels sent from God to a mission here on Earth."

Dew added that Logan and Steele consulted with a dark "demonic" spirit during their meeting last year, and that the being ordered Dew to stop opposing the group.

He said the group's leadership had launched "Satan's attack upon the body of Christ," and that Logan was a demonic force.

"That may sound bizarre to you, man, but it's true," he said in an interview at his Mountainair home Thursday night.

Home to sects

In Manzano, the locals spoke guardedly of the many sects that dot the countryside.

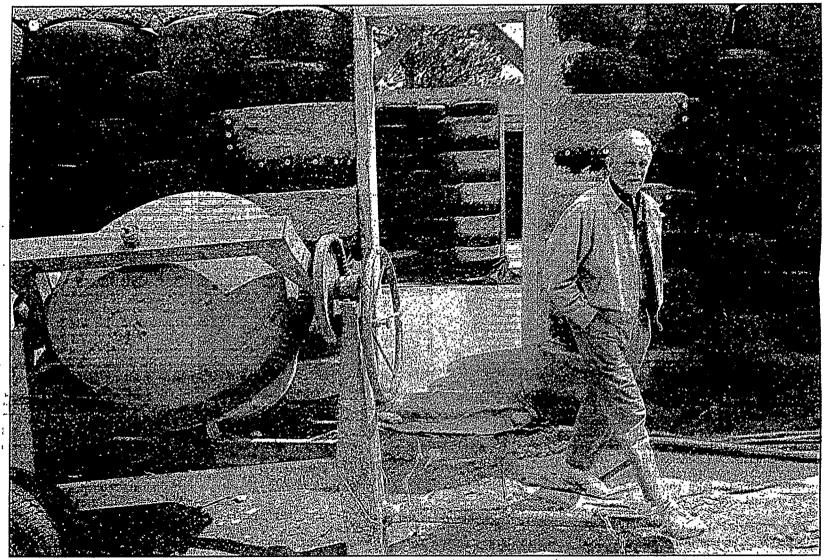
"I see 'em come out, bro," said Gilbert Padilla, 53, as he burned trash outside his trailer on the main road through town. "They're real nice people. They would come around . . . talk to me about the end of the world."

Up the road, at the EJJM Castillo Store, owners Eddie and Josephine Castillo told of one woman who approached them last year, seeking a guide to cross to the other side of Capilla Peak, where she believed a UFO had landed.

"I told her I didn't believe in that stuff," Eddie Castillo said. His wife added that the woman also spoke of the end of the world, and used the words, "Higher Order," which was used by the Heaven's Gate cult in their Internet literature. "There's a lot of people that come over here," Eddie Castillo said.

The woman left, saying she was traveling to Colorado.

Thorsen said one woman belonging to Heaven's Gate had left the cult. He did not identify her, and said he did not know her whereabouts.



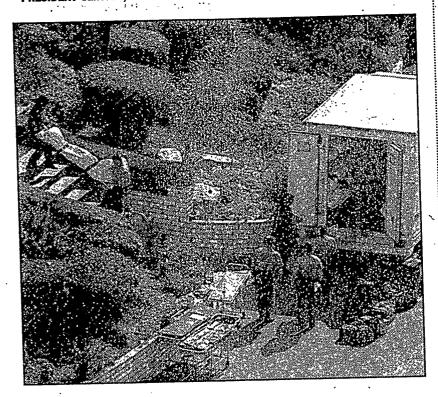
SEANM HAFFEY / Union-Tribune

New owner: Jim Thorsen, leader of a New Mexico patriot-movement organization, bought 40 acres of land from cult members last April. Thorsen said the group's members impressed him as earnest, well-read and "very industrious, hard-working." The group left behind a half-finished, fortress-like compound when they sold the land and moved away.

Notable and Quotable

"Heartbreaking, sickening, shocking."

PRESIDENT CLINTON, on the mass suicide of the Heaven's Gate cultists.



"We know whatever happens to us after we leave our bodies is a step forward."

MARSHALL APPLEWHITE, leader of the Heaven's Gate cult and one of 39 cultists who committed suicide at a Rancho Santa Fe estate, apparently believing they would be picked up by a space ship trailing the Hale-Bopp Comet.

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

G-5 San Diego Union-Tribune San Diego, CA

Date: Edition:

Sunday, 3/30/97

Title:

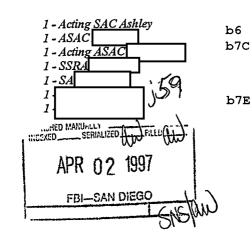
"Notable and Quotable"

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San Diego Indexing:





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Marshall Herff Applewhite

*65, Houston, Texas Applewhite, leader of Heaven's Gate, was a native of Corpus Christi. His father was a Presbyterian minister, and Applewhite studied to become a minister but then switched his focus to music. He received a master's degrée in music from the Uni-. versity of Colorado at Boulder in 1969 and, at some point, he married and had two children. Applewhite also went to Alabama and taught music at the University of Alabama. By 1971, he had apparently divorced and left his family. The genesis of his otherworldly beliefs seems to have occurred in 1972, when Applewhite, then about 40 and recovering from a nervous breakdown, met a nurse named Bonnie Lu Nettles, then 44. The two discovered a mutual interest in astrology and reincarnation and came to believe that they were the mearthly incarnations of aliens. "We're of mixed emo-tions," said Mark Applewhite, Marshall Applewhite's son. "My father is dead - that's ipainful. It's sort of like we've been through a grieving process and now we're seeking closure." Mark Applewhite, 40, said that he last saw his father when he was 5 and his parents were divorcing. He said he, his wife and

two children are born-again ^{;i}Christians "with the real tick-

et to heaven."

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Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

San Diego Union-Tribune San Diego, CA

Date: Edition:

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"The Suicide Victims"

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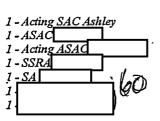
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San Diego Indexing:



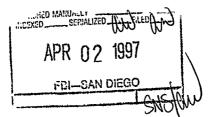
Dana Tracey Abreo 35, Denver, Colo.

Abreo, a half sister to cult member Gary Jordan St. Lõuis, grew up in Twain Harte, Calif. She moved to Denver after high school to åttend paralegal school. Her half brother persuaded her to join the cult. "As soon as I heard it, I knew it was them, said Guy St. Louis, Gary's brother. "To them, it was the only way to leave the planet to leave their bodies behind and escape."



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Susan Frances Strom 44, McKinney, Texas

Strom loved plants, animals and the Earth. She had planned on a career in botany, but one year before graduation her attention, turned to a UFO cult. The: daughter of a federal judge. Strom met up with the cult in 1975. Her father, U.S. District Judge Lyle Strom of Omaha, Neb., thought it was just a phase. "I thought, sure it would be short-lived and she would be back home," he : said yesterday. What attracted the athletic, intelligent. woman - the second oldest in a family of seven — to the cult? "I have no answers," Strom said. "It did not seem consistent with her character and personality." Strom graduated from an all-girls school, Marian High School in Omaha, in 1971. She attended Oregon State University in Corvallis, Ore., where she joined the cult as a senior. Strom last saw his daughter in 1987. He said he never thought about deprogramming or kidnapping her. She was happy, she wasn't being abused and she wasn't being held against her will, he said. "She really felt she had found the right thing and she really thought she was doing what she should be doing," Strom said.

Denise June Thurman 44, Austin, Texas



David Cabot Van Sinderen 48, California

Van Sinderen was the son of the former chairman and chief executive officer of South New England Telephone Co. In the 21 years ... that he was a member of the Heaven's Gate group, his family saw him four times and spoke with him a handful of other times, his family said in a statement yesterday. "While we did not completely understand or agree with David's beliefs, it was apparent to us that he was happy; healthy and acting under his own volition," the statement said. "It seemed to us that the group members were a supportive family unit and David was spiritually fulfilled in his life with them. To David, wherever you may be, we love you," the statement said. Van Sinderen bought property on a 40-acre former youth camp near Mountainair. N.M., in June 1995, according to an official of the insurance company that sold the property. The cult apparently lived there until about eight months ago.

Names withheld

- Male, 44, Minnesota, born in Michigan, passport issued in Los Angeles
- Female, 41, state license unknown, born in Texas, passport issued in Seattle.
- **Female**, 63, Albuquerque, N.M.
- Male, 50, Arizona license, born in New York, passport issued in Los Angeles.

Credits: Staff writers James W. Crawley, Ed Jahn, Rex Dalton, Anthony Millican, Anna Cearley, L. Erik Bratt, Kathryn Balint, Susan Gembrowski, Darlene Himmelspach, Angela Lau, Maria Hunt, and news services contributed to this report.



LaDonna Ann Brugato 40, Englewood, Colo.

Brugato was an outstanding violinist and computer programmer, said her father, Joe Brugato of Newberg, Ore. She was one of nine children born to the real estate agent and former math teacher. Brugato said he lost touch with his daughter when she became involved in the cult and he had hired a private investigator to help him re-establish contact.

Margaret June Bull

53, Ellensburg, Wash. Margaret June Bull grew up on her family's corn and hay farm in a lush valley. She was crowned Ellensburg Rodeo Princess when she was 18, and then went on to earn an English degree from the University of Washington. She taught in Spain for several years. Upon her return, she apparently joined the cult in the mid-1970s. She would call her family a couple of times a year, said her sister-in-law Suzanne Bull, and would slip into town unannounced to visit them for two to four months at a time. "We were always a little surprised, but we knew she would do that," Bull said. She picked up computer skills over the vears, and when she visited, she would assist her father if his computer had a glitch. The last time she visited her family was in 1993, around Thanksgiving, said Bull. At the time, she told relatives that cult members were selfsupporting, drove expensive cars, lived communally, moved frequently and were celibate. "She liked people to talk about themselves, and she asked questions and usually just listened and showed a true concern about other people," said Bull. "The family accepted her for who she was."



Erika Ernst 40, Calgary, Canada

Ernst's family members were vacationing in Los Angeles when they heard the news: A cult had committed mass suicide. They knew she belonged to Heaven's Gate. They drove to San Diego to see for themselves. "For 21 years, I tried to find them," said her father, Edwald Ernst, outside the Medical Examiner's Office. "We had one visit, maybe one phone call. She told us only that 'I'm doing the best; I'm happy.' But I think she was brainwashed." Family members made plans to have her body shipped to Calgary. Ernst's friends from St. Francis High School in northwest Calgary described her as a good student, fun-loving and interested in travel. However, a year, after she graduated, Ernst and a boyfriend had begun talking about joining a cult. Ernst soon gave away all her material possessions and left Calgary. Ernst's sister, who would not disclose her name, told a Calgary paper, "We want everybody to know the truth, not that she was a lunatic or anything like that. That's what everybody's thinking."



Gail Renee Maeder 28, Sag Harbor, N.Y.

Fear of death drove Maeder to the cult, said her mother, Alice Maeder. "They promised her she would never die," Alice Maeder said. "Her mind was controlled beyond her control." Gail Maeder left Sag Harbor, N.Y., five years ago, moving to California with her boyfriend. "At first she seemed happy," said her father, Robert Maeder, describing how she opened a small shop and did housework to pay the rent. "But then she broke up with her boyfriend, lost her business and fell in with the wrong crowd," he said. In 1994, she sent a note saying she had met some friends in Arizona and was going to tour the West with them. The note was written on the back of a recruiting flier for a group then known as Total Overcomers. Gail Maeder last spoke to her family in November when she said she was fine and not to worry about her. "But of course we did," her father said. "We always worried about her but couldn't get her to come home.

Steven Terry McCarter 41, Albuquerque, N.M.



David Geoffery Moore

41, Los Gatos, Calif.

Moore was 19 when he attended a meeting of the cult in 1975. At first, Nancie Brown told herself that her son was just going through a phase, searching for himself. In the 22 years that followed, Brown saw her son only twice, when he came home for visits in 1985 and in 1987. Each time, she said, he seemed "calm, rational" and "quite happy." The son of an English professor (who gavehim his middle name, after Chaucer) and a teacher of developmentally disabled children, Moore was something of a problem student, hyperactive and struggling with what his mother now believes was dyslexia. After graduating, he told his mother that "he couldn't picture himself going out and having a job and going to an office and having a family and doing all those things," she said. When she did hear about her son, she was comforted to learn that he was putting his teen-age knack for auto mechanics to use to keep the cars running for the group. On his visit home, he fixed her car too. "There's some comfort in knowing they died happy," Brown said. "I believe they did die happily, contentedly. The coroner said David looked very calm. I know they all cared very deeply about one another and were devoted to their leader. I'm sure they did

it all with hope."



Thomas Alva Nichols 59, Arizona

Nichols was the brother of actress Nichelle Nichols, who played Lt. Uhura on the original "Star Trek" television series. Her brother had cut off all communication with the family for 20 years in keeping with his religious beliefs, Nichelle Nichols said on "Larry King Live." He resurfaced several years ago, when their mother died, to assure relatives he was OK, she said. He sought her advice in 1994 when the group planned to "go public," she said. Thomas Nichols apparently knew the arrival of a comet would be a momentous personal event, calling it "the great comet that would come some day," she said. They died "with great dignity," she said.

Susan Elizabeth Nora Paup 54, New Mexico



Margaret Ella Richter 46, Oroville, Calif.

Richter was valedictorian at Las Plumas High School in Oroville in 1969, said her sister, Jean Long. She majored in computer science, math and German at the University of California Berkeley, graduating in three years, Long said. After her three-year marriage ended, she went to Los Angeles in 1975 and earned a master's degree in computer science at UCLA. After that, her family and friends had little contact with her. Over the next 22 years, Richter visited relatives in Oroville twice.



Joel Peter McCormick 29, Madison, Wis.

McCormick's mother once said that she saw the cult as having taken his decisions away from him. McCormick, who graduated from Mal-'colm Shabazz City High School in Madison, Wis., in 1986, joined a group then called the Total Overcomers in Seattle on May 16, 1994. In a published report in 1994. his mother, Megan Mc-Cormick, said she was "reasonably certain that Joel is physically all right. Sometimes I think he'll be irrevocably changed if and when he comes out."



Yvonne McCurdy-Hill 38, Cincinnati, Ohio

Only weeks after she gave birth to twin girls, Yvonne McCurdy-Hill left her babies, three other, children and a management job at the U.S. Postal Service, where she had worked for 11 years, to head to California with her husband, Steven Hill. That was last August. He returned to Cincinnati around Christmas, she died with the cult this week. She telephoned her mother once, in September. "She asked her mother. 'How are you? Fine. How are the kids? Fine.' Click. ... and that was it," said Rev. H.L. Harvey, a family friend and pastor at New Friendship Baptist Church in Cincinnati.

The family never heard from her again. McCurdy's relatives only learned this week of Steven Hill's break from. the cult and his return to : Cincinnati. The couple met the cult on the Internet about a year ago, "I was there when they were surfing the Internet," Steve Hill's mother said. "I didn't like it then. That man, Do, or whatever his name was, this man was not right. I told my son, You need to run for your life. This will kill you." When he returned, Steve Hill told his mother that he had been asked to leave. "They couldn't get him to convert. They know when you're not with them." she said. "It's not like a prison. They bought him a ticket back to Cincinnati."



Nancy Dianne Nelson 45, Mesa, Ariz.

Nelson worked for Dr. Richard Mickle of Mesa; Ariz., during portions of 1995 and 1996. A former co-worker said she called herself A.J. and described herself as a nun without a last name, saying she lived in a monastery with two men who were highly knowledgeable about computers and did some work for Mickle. Mickle, an osteopathic surgeon, said he knew nothing of the suicides or the California connection. The address listed on her driver's license was an age-restricted mobile home park in Scottsdale, Ariz. The manager, Gordon Miles, said no one under that name is listed in rental records from the past three

Norma Jeane Nelson 59, Dallas, Texas

Nelson told a former neighbor at a North Dallas apartment complex that she was from Star Trek. "We just looked at her in surprise. ... It just didn't dawn on us that

she was in a type of cult," Cynthia McGowan said. "We thought that maybe she was crazy." Judith Ann Rowland 50, Dallas and Albuquerque, N.M.

Michael Barr Sandoe 26, Boulder, Colo.

Sandoe had been in the Army, where he became a paratrooper and a Ranger, said his mother, JoAnne Sandoe of Abingdon, Va. "He was in Desert Storm. He was in the infantry — out of Fort Benning, Ga.," she said. After that, he "worked and traveled." JoAnne Sandoe said she had no indication her son might be involved with the Heaven's Gate group.

Brian Alan Schaaf 40, New Mexico

Joyce Angela Skalla 58, New Mexico

Gary Jordan St. Louis 44, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho St. Louis, 44, left his northern Idaho home in 1992 to join the cult, leaving his Coeur d'Alene girlfriend, Shelly King, with his personal belongings and a videotape explaining his decision. "Today is February 12, 1992. It's Wednesday. I want everybody who may see this, or to know, that I have chosen to leave," he said on the tape. "I want to rejoin my heavenly father, and my classmates, the students of my heavenly father. ... I'm really happy about this. ... To walk away and begin doing some work for my real father means more to me than anything."

'Robert John Arancio '46, Dallas, Texas

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Raymond Alan Bowers 45, Jupiter, Fla. Bowers was "lost," sa

. Bowers was "lost," said Karin Nickeson, who befriended him along with her on husband, Denny, when they all found a common interest in music. "He cried all the time. He was very much in love with his wife, who dio vorced him. That's when he inlost it," Nickeson said. His dwife left him a few years ago. He was also depressed about the death of his brother, said i is former Jupiter landlord Margo Bruynel, who added that Bowers disappeared about three years ago without paying the rent. Bowers first met inembers of the cult 22 years ago during a lecture at Stan-19 ford University, said his sister, Susan. He was "a spiritual person who saw good in everybody. God knew his echeart. God wouldn't turn his back on him," she said.

Lawrence Jackson Gale 47. Lake Forest, Calif.

Darwin Lee Johnson 42, Orem, Utah

Johnson played in a band called Dharma Combat, former band manager David Fratt said. Fratt said the band was playing in several clubs. The band's lyrics talked about death and aliens.



Julie LaMontagne

45, Las Cruces, N.M.
LaMontagne, who lived most recently in Las Cruces, N.M., studied nursing at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst more than 20 years ago. Ann Sheridan, assistant dean at the nursing school and a former nursing professor, said she recalled a Julie LaMontagne who was a dean's list student with a love of nursing.



Jacqueline Opal Leonard 72, Littleton, Colo.

Leonard was the oldest among the dead. She grew up in Des Moines, Iowa, and raised her two daughters and a son there with her late husband, said her son-in-law, Angelo Bellizzi of Seattle. Bellizzi said Leonard "was always groping and looking for something that interested her." In the early 1970s, she moved to Colorado, where she met members of "the UFO cult," Bellizzi said. A few years later she joined the group in San Francisco, he said. Leonard's departure has always confounded the family. "Grandmothers don't run away," Bellizzi said. "The kids are supposed to run away."

Jel

Jeffrey Howard Lewis 41, San Antonio, Texas

Lewis was a former massage therapist from San Antonio. Four years ago, Lewis sold his possessions and left

San Antonio to join Heaven's Gate, according to a friend, David Tayloe. "He told us that he wouldn't be communicating with any of his friends and to be happy for him, because this is what he felt was right for him," Tayloe said. Lewis, who worked as a masseur out of his house, said he was joining a cult for the second time.

Virginia Norton, rushed to their Springfield, Mo., home. "Her tea was still hot. I had just missed her." she said.

Cheryl Elaine Butcher 42, Springfield, Mo.

Butcher visited her hometown, six years ago, she went

shopping, to the movies and

out to dinner with her mother. In 1993, two years later,

her mother visited her in

peared. At the time of her death, Butcher had been associated with the cult group for half her life. "Her mother would rather that she had not

been involved, but her moth-

er knew what her philosophy

was and there was no talking her out of it," said family friend Betty Chatman. She

was recalled as a happy child

who enjoyed ballads, played

piano and was intelligent. She

became a born-again Christ-

Chatman. Butcher was 21 in

ian in her early teens, said

1976 when she abandoned

her plans for college to join the group. Warned by the

family's Baptist preacher that

her daughter might be plan-

ning to leave, her mother,

Texas. Then she disap-

The last time Cheryl Elaine

Michael Howard Carrier 48, Richardson, Texas

Suzanne Sylvia Cooke 54, New Mexico

John M. Craig (aka Logan Lahson) 63, Durango, Colo.

¿Craig, a onetime political candidate who ran a dude ranch and had a bit part in "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," left his wife and six young children in Durango, Colo., in July 1975. "For me, he died 22 years ago, said Mary Ann Craig, his exwife. "When we found out he was dead, there was a sense of closure more than anything for us." Craig owned the Wilderness Trails Guest Ranch. Former neighbors recalled him as the first horseman out of the boxcar in the famous train robbery scene in the movie. In 1970, he ran as a Republican for the Colorado House. He lost by fewer than 20 votes.

Betty Eldrie Deal 64. Dallas, Texas

18-year-old recounts his Internet visit with cultist

By Sandi Dolbee RELIGION & ETHICS EDITOR

It began with a simple hello and the words, "I think I might be able to help you."

Jason Bolton had gone into the Internet

chat area shortly after midnight on Dec. 16 seeking advice for the Web site he was building.

A reply came from "CandlShot," who impressed Bolton with his knowledge of computer graphics.

The 18-year-old Michigan resident thanked CandlShot for the assistance.

But CandlShot wasn't ready to sign off. He chatted on: What's your age? Do you like working with computers? Are you looking for work? Do you live with family or friends? What's your phone number?



Yvonne
McCurdy-Hill:
Ohio woman
and her
husband left
their children
for the cult.

Bolton thought little of the encounter. "I figured he was just being friendly."

But three months later, Bolton is figuring again.

In that conversation, CandlShot identi-

See RECRUIT on Page A-16

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A-1 San Diego Union-Tribune San Diego, CA

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Sunday, 3/30/97

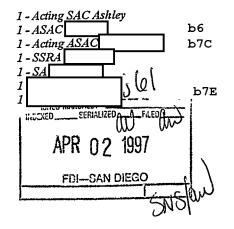
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"18-year-old recounts his Internet visit with cultist"

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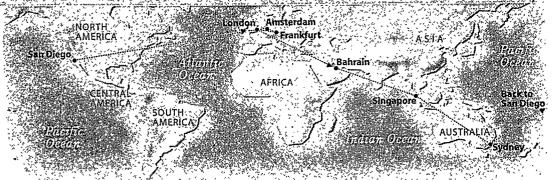
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Terrestrial plans

Investigators were initially puzzled by a 3-by 4-foot map of the world mounted on a wall of the first floor of the Rancho Santa Fe mansion where 39 cult members committed suicide. Red dots marking some cities were connected by black lines, markings that investigators thought might represent other sects contemplating suicide. But the former cult member who found the bodies confirmed the map represented future fectualing stops, a future that now will never come about.



SOURCE: San Diego County Sheriff's Department

MARK NOWLIN / Union-Tribune

headline on one poster.

Unlike the vague Internet chat, the flier details their beliefs of an "Evolutionary Kingdom Level Above Human."

"A very accelerated 'classroom' (for 'birthing' — incarnating) is now being offered for the third and last time in this civilization," the poster reads.

"If you showed any interest, they would really give you the rush and try to get you to come with them right away, like literally jump in the van and leave town with them," says Janja Lalich, a San Francisco

Bay Area expert who has followed this "UFO cult" since the 1970s.

But the conversion process was more gradual.

"You get them in with a series of small steps," says Kalish, the UCSD psychiatrist. "Then you get them to adopt a series of more absurd steps, each one of which is not particularly absurd, but when you take the entire strain from beginning to end, it's crazy."

Thé message itself was a seductive one, with promises of a better life in the great beyond — promises wrapped in the validity of religious

language.

Marshall Applewhite, the group's white-haired leader known as Do, told his students that he had inhabited Jesus' body nearly 2,000 years ago.

Organized religions were hypocrites, part of the "great cover-up." The "true Kingdom of 'God'" awaited only them. Their Web site listed dozens of Bible verses that they say supported their beliefs.

The crowning revelation was that each one of them was really an extraterrestrial and their earthly bodies were only "containers" to be used until the time was right.

"Once you're an extraterrestrial how do you walk away from that?" asks Lalich. "It's a very good trap."

Recruitment is one thing. Mass suicide is something else altogether.

er.

"That's where most of the media has made a mistake," Kalish retorts. "This wasn't suicide. This was suicide to you and me, of course. What they thought they were doing was they were leaving their human body to join a spaceship that was going to take them to a 'higher level, to the next kingdom."

In the videotapes left by the men and women, "not one of them said this was suicide," he adds. "They had their bags packed, they had their new sneakers on."

Bolton, the Michigan teen-ager, looks back at his cyberspace conversation and admits it now seems "very, very spooky."

Bolton never gave CandlShot his phone number. That just isn't done on the Internet, he says. CandlShot ended his conversation shortly after Bolton messaged him with that admonition.

As word leaks out about this chat, Bolton says he is getting lots of e-mail.

"People are kind of referring to me as the one that got away."

Staff writer Jim Crawley and news services contributed to this report.

- po 2.

Recruit

He sought advice; he got a pitch

Continued from A-1

fied himself as being with a computer group called Higher Source the Internet business name for what we know now as the Heaven's

Gate cult.

This conversation, found on the back roads of the information superhighway, offers clues into how this techno-cult used the World Wide Web to recruit new members. It worked on some, say some grievlearned of Heaven's Gate through the World Wide Web.

With Bolton, CandlShot pushed the conversation gently along with questions, praise and philosophical

asides.

When Bolton talks about his age, 'CandlShot replies, "Age is nothing."

When Bolton balks at giving his phone number, CandlShot re-Sponds: "You will not succeed uncless you trust. Do you trust me enough to give me a set of numbers?

Deftly, CandlShot is trying to - 'turn from the subject of computers to something much more personal.

"It's a religious version of bait and switch, is what it amounts to," says J. Gordon Melton, a cult expert and director of the Institute for the Study of American Religion in Santa Barbara.

"What they're doing is screening people," explains Melton, when told - of the Internet conversation.

There appears to be a methodol-

ogy in this conversation.

'Remember, these are techies, they are people who think logically," says Dr. Mark Kalish, a forensic psychiatrist at UCSD Medical School.

"You don't start out with the million-dollar question," Kalish adds. "You have to develop some relation-

... The Internet recruiting tactics led Steve Hill and his wife, Yvonne - McCurdy-Hill, of Cincinnati to - abandon their five children and join the cult.

The couple met the cult on the ...-Internet about a year ago. "I was there when they were surfing the Internet," Steve's mother, Eartha Hill, said. "I didn't like it then.

· But the Internet was not the only way Heaven's Gate recruited its

members.

Using the name Human Individual Metamorphosis (HIM) in the 1970s, and then later Total Overcomers Anonymous, teams went from city to city giving pitches in rented meeting rooms.

They advertised with fliers posted in New Age book stores and hangouts for outer space enthusiasts. "UFOs, SPACE ALIENS, AND THEIR FINAL FLIGHT FOR EARTH'S SPOILS," screams the

Cultists believed evil aliens ruled

Newfound document warns of 'Luciferians'

By Philip J. LaVelle ... STAFF WRITER

MANZANO, N.M. — Heaven's Gate cult leader Marshall Applewhite believed the world was controlled by satanic space aliens called "Luciferians" who programmed mankind to blindly follow lives of meaningless normalcy, according to a newly discovered manuscript he prepared.

The cult mailed a copy of the 1996 document to New Mexico patriot movément figure Jim Thorsen. Thorsen's home in the hills above this high-plains hamlet is on the site of a compound the group was building and living on in 1995.

The 4-inch-thick manuscript is titled, "How and When 'Heaven's Gate' (The Door to the Physical Kingdom Level Above Human) May Be Entered."

Cult experts who have followed the group's evolution said the manuscript was consistent with Applewhite's convoluted "mishmash" philosophy. They said Applewhite will take a place in history beside the likes of Jim Jones, David Koresh and Charles Manson.

In other developments yesterday:

Sheriff's investigators said they probably will wrap up the investigation this week into the deaths of Applewhite and his 38 followers in Rancho Santa Fe.

■ Officials said the families of all but four of the dead have been notified. The family members of three appeared at the Medical Examiner's Office to claim their relatives' bodies.

■ And private guards were stationed around the Rancho Santa Fe house where the bodies were found, to ward off curiosity seekers.

The document uncovered yesterday contains several testimonials and "farewells" from Applewhite's followers. Many were dated April 1996, indicating the cultists' plans to commit suicide were highly developed at least 11 months ago.

In the introduction to the manuscript, Applewhite compared himself to Jesus

See CULT on Page A-16

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FDI—SAN DIEGO

Cult

Experts call leader's teachings a 'mishmash'

Continued from A-1

Christ — as he had in his Internet writings - and said fallen angels, one-time students of the "Kingdom of Heaven ... who 'flunked out' of the classroom," control mankind's

beliefs and behavior.

"The space aliens, or Luciferians, use the discarnate spirits (the minds that are disembodied at the death of a body) as their primary servants — against potential members of the Kingdom of God," the introduction said under the heading, "What Our Purpose Is - The Simple 'Bottom Line.' "

"These 'influences,' or discarnates, are constantly 'programming' every human 'plant' (vehicle or body), to accept a set of beliefs

"His philosophy is a mishmash. It's soup."

JANJA LALICH Cult Recovery and Information Center

and norms for behavior during a lifetime. From our point of view, this 'programming' will find that body, and the vast majority of all human bodies, all but unusable by , students of the Kingdom of Heav-

The cultists believed they were a chosen few sent to earth to inhabit human bodies, which they referred ---to as "containers." Thirty-nine cult members, including Applewhite,

"shed" their bodies in a mass suicide last week at a Rancho Santa Fe mansion, believing they would thus. attain a higher form and rendez- : vous with a UFO they believed is trailing the Hale-Bopp comet.

The satanic space alien forces that Applewhite wrote of seek to steer the human mind into following "what is 'socially acceptable,' what is politically correct," his in-

troduction said.

"They want you to be a perfect servant to society — to the 'acceptable establishment,' to humanity, and to false religious concepts. Part of that 'stay blinded' formula goes

"Above all, be married, a good parent, a reasonable churchgoer. buy a house, pay your mortgage. pay your insurance, have a good line of credit, be socially committed, and graciously accept death with the hope that 'through His shed blood' you will go to Heaven after your death.'

The text is "gobbledygook," said Janja Lalich of the Cult Recovery and Information Center in Alame-

da.

"He has always talked about Luciferians," Lalich said. "His philosophy is a mishmash. It's soup."

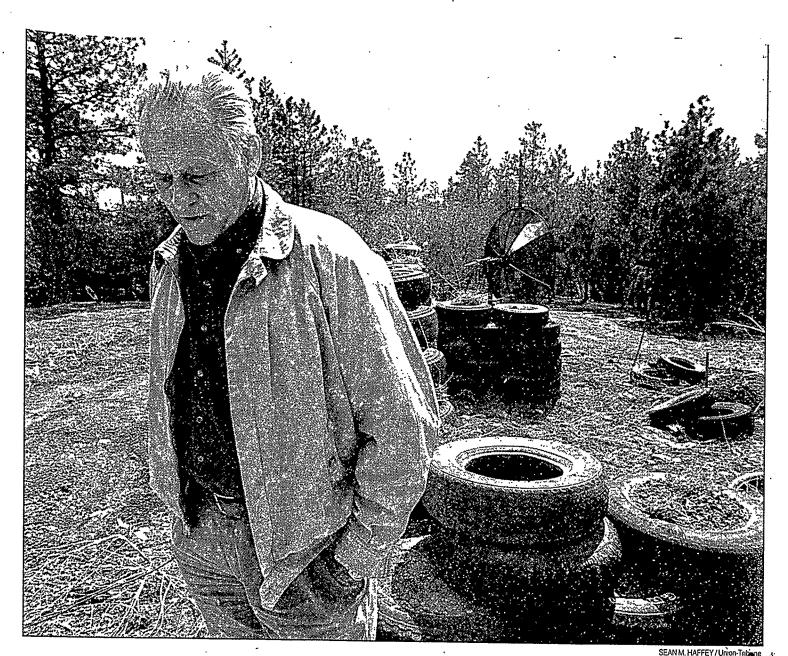
The Rev. Peter Barnes of Clairemont Emmanuel Baptist Church, who has worked with cults for 20 years, said Applewhite's tenets were basic fare. UFOs, biblical context, celestial phenomena and the concept of moving to a higher plane "are the standard features of what we call apocalypse cults," he said.

Lalich said Applewhite's ramblings were also typical of brain-

washing techniques.

"After Jim Jones, after Waco, Texas, after Charlie Manson haven't we learned that these people are all the same?" she asked. "They are psychological con men."

Staff writer Valerie Alvord contributed to this report.

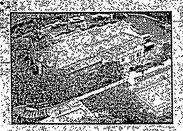


Received cult manuscript: Jim Thorsen, standing on the 40-acre plot in New Mexico that he purchased from the Heaven's Gate group last year, was sent a 4-inch-thick manuscript by the group. The document contains several testimonials and "farewells" from Applewhite's followers, many of which were dated April 1996.

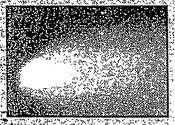
LOOKING BACK

How it unfolded

ow the story of the mass suicide in Rancho Santa Fe unfolded last week:



Wednesday: An anonymous tip sends two sheriffs deputies to a mansion in Rancho Santa Fe, where they find the bodies of 39 members of a cult around 4 p.m. The victims, dressed in black and covered with purple shrouds, are lying in beds and on mattresses throughout the mansion.



Thursday: Authorities dislose that the victims, revealed as members of a cult known as Heaven's Gate. poisoned themselves in shifts by ingesting a mixture of alcohol and phenobarbital, then placed plastic bags over their heads to cut off their air supply. The cult's members, who ran a business designing World. Wide Web sites, apparently believed they were going to hitch a ride to a better life. aboard a spaceship trailing the Hale-Bopp comet. Mar-shall Applewhite, 65, who founded the group in the 1970s, is identified as the leader and, later in the day, as one of the victims.



Friday: The story of the mass suicide turns more bizarre with the revelation that six of the 18 men, including Applewhite; had their testicles removed because they believed that physical pleasures impeded their journey. The Medical Examiner's Office begins the difficult task of notifying relatives of the victims.



Saturday: All the autopsies are completed and the families of all but four of the dead have been notified. Sheriff's investigators say they expect to wrap up the investigation this week after they have examined the cult members' belongings, as well as the extensive computer files they left behind.

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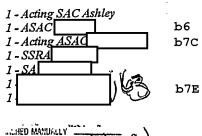
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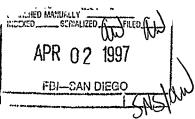
"How it unfolded"

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MOUNT CLIPPING IN SPACE BELOW

INTERNET CHAT

Cult recruiting on-line

The following verbatim transcript of a conversation in an internet chat area occurred in Decembet between 18 year old Jason Bolton of Michigan who had asked for help designing his own web site and someone who identified as working for Higher Source, now known to be the Internet business of the Heaven's Gate cult. Bolton's on-line identification has been obscurred. The person with Higher Source was using the nickname Candlshot.

(CandiShot) Helio

(CandlShot) I think I might be able to help you (XXXXXXX) Really? What's better? Animated Gifs or Shockwaye?

(CandiShot) Both have their attributes which mak them good for use, but if we had our pick we would choose AGIfs

(XXXXXXXX) Why?

(CandiShot) Simply put, cost ShockWave requires

software on a server machine, and it is expensive. Agifs

though, are simply downloaded and treated like a

(CandiShot) Much, much cheaper.

(XXXXXXXX) Thanks...I guess that answers my question

(Candishot) No problem Do you have a web site? (Candishot) if you do I would like to look at it. (Candishot) Are you there?

(XXXXXXX) Sorry, I'm hère... I was talking on another channel.

(CandlShot) Oh, that's okay. I thought I lost you though.

(CandiShot) Just a moment.

(CandiShot) That is a very impressive start. Are you self taught?

(XXXXXXXX) Yeah, mostly I use web editors here and

there, but it's the creativity right? (Candishot) That's a good attitude Do you like working, with computers?

(CandiShot) Hello?

(XXXXXXX) Sorry... got caught up againt (CandlShot) No problem. How old are you? (XXXXXXXX) Like the nick implies, I'm 18 years of age.

(Candishot)Ah, I see Sorry if I'm fairly inadept at this, but we normally use IRC for business.

(XXXXXXX) We all start somewhere Heh heh. (CandlShot) Yes, we do Do you like working with computers and the Internet?

(XXXXXXX) Yes, I do... I ve been playing on the computer with basic and HTML since I was 5 or 6. Gosh, I'm old!;)

(CandiShot) Age is nothing.

(XXXXXXX) I guiess. I wish EVERYONE thought that

(CandiShot) Are you looking for work? (XXXXXXXX) Always! Why, you got any?

(Candishot) Well, we are always looking for associates

(XXXXXXX) Who is we? You have a company, too? (Candishot) Yes We use the name Higher Source Contract. Enterprises for our busines purposes (XXXXXXXX) What is the url?

(CandiShot)Sorry about that it's www.cris.com/~font.

(CandlShot) Do you like what you see? (XXXXXXX) Holy crap, the graphics on here alone are worth money, did you go to school for this? (CandlShot) Not exactly As I was saying, if you're interested in work, we may be able to accomodate. Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

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"Cult recruiting on-line"

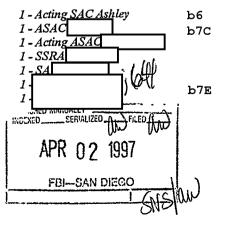
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(CandiShot) California. (XXXXXXXX) Whoa...that is kinda far. (Candishot) Well if you agreed to work with us we would like to have you here with us but we could accomodate you where you live Where do you live? (XXXXXXXX) in the COLD state of Michigan.) (Candishot) Actually, if you could no relocate, we are looking for associates in that area. (XXXXXXXX) Well, i couldn't relocate; (CandlShot) That is understandable: However, you can still meet our needs. Do you live with family or (CandiShot) Actually, this is a conversation we should be having over the telephone. May I have your number so'l may call you? (XXXXXXXX) Um. well...no. You know how it is...you don't give out your number over the Net, besides... (just met you. (CándlShot) You will not sűccedd unless you trust Do you trust me enough to give me a set of numbers?/ (XXXXXXX) No.11m afraid I don't Sorry...how about this I'll call you? I couldn't talk long, but we could

(XXXXXXX) Where are you located?

calls coming in at this time. (XXXXXXX) Well, you can email me (Candishot) That would be feasable your address?

(CandiShot) No, I'm afraid that we cannot really have

(XXXXXXXX) xxxxxxxx@xxx.net

get something done

(CandiShot) Thank you. I'm somy that you are not more trusting. If we have need of you, we will send you mail. (XXXXXXXX) I'm trusting, I just know the rules on here.

(Cand|Shot) If you must follow rules:
(XXXXXXX) Dude, I don't have time for this: If you were serious, you'd understand my reluctance. Beside it seems as if you guys do far better work than I.
(Cand|Shot) we would teach you what you would need to know, and make you far more productive.

than you expect yourself to be. (CandiShot) but I'm afraid I must go. It has been a pleasure. Take care.

Probe into cult suicides nears an end

By J. Harry Jones
STAFF WRITER

Sheriff's detectives said yesterday they have nearly completed their investigation into the mass suicide in Rancho Santa Fe.

Inyestigators probing the largest mass suicide on U.S. soil, which has dominated the local, national and even world news, say they have found no signs of criminal activity or anything suspicious enough to merit further investigation.

"Once the medical examiner rules officially these were all suicides, we'll be done with it," one ranking sheriff's official said, adding:

"It's not as if we don't care, but there's nothing more for us to do and it won't warrant the extensive manpower we've committed to it so far."

Though a few unanswered questions remain, officials say the strange incident has been explained as fully as possible.

Sheriff's homicide Lt. Gerald Lipscomb said all members of the cult have been accounted for as having perished in the mansion. He said there is no indication that any active member of the group remains alive.

Investigators have yet to complete a close examination of the computer files found in the Colina Norte home. The FBI has been asked to help the Sheriff's Department because of its agents' technological expertise.

And authorities have not determined how the cult was able to obtain the phenobarbital the members ate — mixed with pudding or applesauce — although bipscomb said four or five cupboards in the home contained unlabeled prescription medication containers.

A law enforcement source said one or more members of the group may have had a legitimate reason for being prescribed the drug, such as to control seizures or to treat insomnia, and then simply saved the tablets for months or years.

The county medical examiner, Dr. Brian Blackbourne, said a lethal dose of the barbiturate amounted to 50 tablets for each person.

Yet there are some incongruities that still bother officials, things that don't add up.

Why would a group planning mass suicide leave the refrigerators fully stocked with food? Why would it have created a large map, prominently displayed on a first-floor wall, plotting membership recruiting drives?

And why did all the bodies have \$5 bills and rolls of quarters in the pockets of their tunic-style shirts?

Those things probably will never be known.

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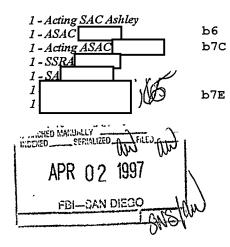
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"Probe into cult suicides nears an end"

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COVER STORY

For some, family tragedy was cause to seek new life

By Gale Holland and Richard Price USA TODAY

SAN DIEGO; Calif. — Julie La Montagne had lost the father she worshiped. Raymond Bowers had lost his brother in a drowning and his wife in a divorce. Gail Maeder had lost her business and her boyfriend.

As details gradually surfaced over the weekend about the 39 members of Heaven's Gate who committed suicide, the pattern was unmistakable: For the most part, they were not irrational or bizarre personalities. They simply stumbled across the cult during troubled periods of their lives. For some, like LaMontagne, Bowers

San Diego a hotbed of New Age dogma, **2A** and Maeder, a sudden tragedy or failure sent them spinning away from families and friends in search of a new beginning. For others — angry teen-agers, brilliant students who didn't fit in and young people struggling with their sexual identities — the cult satisfied a lifelong hunger to belong.

And there was a third group people who were experiencing

what many of us would consider a routine life change, like going off to college or having a baby. As it turns out, say experts, even those experiences can disrupt some people's lives enough to attract them to a cult. Theoretically,

Please see COVER STORY next page ▶

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"For some, family tragedy was cause to seek new life"

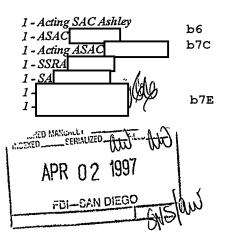
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2A · MONDAY, MARCH 31, 1997 · USA TODAY

COVER STORY

They don't know what they're doing in life'

Continued from 1A = 1

being lured into a cult can happen to the emotionally vulnerable if the timing and circumstances are right. And that's borne out by the life stories of the people who died here last week.

In each case, experts believe, prospective cultists were vulnerable emotionally. And once they landed in the flock, cult co-founders Bonnie Lu Nettles and Marshall Herff Applewhite systematically cut them off from the past and filled their world with a new obsession more enduring than their pain.

Prospects arrive at cults "unhappy, displaced, looking for something," says Marc Galanter, a psychiatry professor and national cult expert at New York University. "What we've found is when they join the group, there is a considerable elevation of mood and relieving of anxiety. It's like they're in love. All their problems are solved by their new relationships."

With as many as 1,000 cult movements across the country, prospective members are likely to choose one with a philosophy that strikes them as credible. That suggests most of these 39 believed in some kind of alien presence before they ever joined the cult. Since its inception in 1972, Heaven's Gate has contended that its members would rise to a "Level Beyond Human" by riding a spaceship into the heavens.

How the cult made the leap from space bliss to mass suicide is more troubling, experts say. Susan Palmer, a professor of religion at Concordia University in Montreal and co-editor of an upcoming book, *Millennium*, *Messiahs and Mayhem*, suggests that stress could play into a death pact. "The pressures are great," she says. "These little groups (of people) may be facing persecution. They may not be doing well financially. It is rare but sometimes violence becomes a solution."

In some cases, that ending seems almost incomprehensible. John Craig of Durango, Colo., had been a winner. He played a bit part as an actor in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.* At the time he joined the group, he was a leading land developer and married with six children. People were mystified.

But R.W. "Nick" Turner Jr., a Durango banker, acknowledged Sunday that Craig's business was in trouble at the time. "It happened where there was a dip in the economy. He was pretty much stretched out. When you look back, I guess you can see little cracks in the concrete."

Maybe that's not what drove Craig to the cult. Clearly, though, he was facing a crisis at the time.

Former cultists envy 39 who killed selves

By Richard Price and Gale Holland USA TODAY

Former members of Heaven's Gate said Sunday that they envy the 39 people who committed suicide last week, and an author said other cult members have told him they plan to "go up in a light ship."

Nick Cooke, the husband of suicide victim Suzanne Cooke and a former cult member himself, told CBS's 60 Minutes that he wished he had "had the strength to have remained ... to have stuck it out and gotten stronger and continued to be a part of that group."

Cooke and another ex-member said dozens still believe in the cult's ideas, including that they will be beamed to space.

An editor of a UFO newsletter said he was contacted last week by 13 other devotees of the cult known as the "ground crew." They said cult leader Marshall Herff Applewhite is returning for them in a ship.

"My fear is they may be contemplating suicide to join him," said Lee Scargel, editor of The Galactic Observer and author of a science fiction novel. They said the rendezvous would happen on Easter in the "Four Corners area" where Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and Utah meet. They added that another group expects a rendezvous April 24.

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Scargel said last week that during a March 15 meeting. Applewhite said he was dying of liver cancer. But San Diego Chief Medical Examiner Brian Blackbourne said his body had no signs of cancer.

Or consider the case of Margaret Ella Richter. A brilliant student at Oroville High School in Northern California's ranch country, Richter graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in three years with a triple major in math, German and computer science. "No small feat" for a woman in the early 1970s, her high school counselor, Jane Hammer, points out.

Richter was always runner-up in the local beauty pageant, a 4-H club member and a singer with the then-prominent national touring group Up With People. "The all-American girl," says Hammer, who none-theless says she's not altogether surprised at Richter's fate.

"I've worked with a lot of highly intelligent teenagers, and it isn't easy for them to communicate ... Margaret tried to be ordinary ... but she just had this monkey on her back about her intelligence," Hammer says.

Susan Frances Strom grew up in Bellevue, Neb., as the popular, attractive, athletic daughter of a senior U.S. District judge in Omaha, Neb.

Lyle Strom never understood why his daughter walked away from a bright future. "She always had a lot of friends and was very close to her brothers and sisters," Strom says. "She'd come home alone and stay here several days. She always seemed so peaceful and so satisfied and happy."

But she joined the cult shortly after leaving home for the first to time to study at Oregon State University. Experts say many don't realize how

traumatic that transition is. Mark Meusee, an expert on cults at Rhodes College in Memphis says that's precisely why cults so often recuit on college campuses.

"A typical cult member is a teen-ager ... looking for some kind of structure," he says. In fact, the majority of those who died here last week were in their late teens or early 20s at the time they were recruited.

But it can happen at any age. LaDonna Brugato was a successful and happy 37-year-old computer programming whiz and an outstanding violinist when something happened three years ago. Her family won't discuss specifics. But her father, Joe Brugato of Newberg, Ore., acknowledged it was "a very vulnerable period of her life."

"Cults are dangerous," her father warns. "They are able to recruit normal, educated, bright people of any age and sex. They're dangerous, and if you have any children, your chil-

dren are potentially cult members."

In most cases, it's not hard to spot when someone's ripe for recruiting. Bowers, for example, was terribly tormented because he had watched his brother die in a freak boating accident. His depression was so deep that it led to divorce, and he left his home in Connecticut for Jupiter, Fla.

But the change of scenery didn't help. Friends said he frequently cried over his brother. "I don't think he ever got over

it," landlord Margo Bruynel says.

Finally, he disappeared from his garage apartment three

years ago without telling anyone good-bye.

Maeder, a native of Sag Harbor, N.Y., was 24 when she dropped out of college and moved to Monterey, Calif., with her boyfriend in 1994. The couple opened a New Age boutique. It failed and so did the relationship, family members said. Heaven's Gate "promised her she would never die," her mother, Alice, says. "Her mind was controlled beyond her control."

And LaMontagne was considered a happy person with a bright future as a nurse after graduating from the University of Massachussetts-Amherst. But when her father died, she fell apart. "She thought he was her knight in shining armor," says her brother, Andrew LaMontagne of Windsor, Vt. "When he passed away, Julie just freaked out. And then she met those people, and it was all over."

Contributing: Fred Bayles, Kristen Hartzell and Dawnya Pring.

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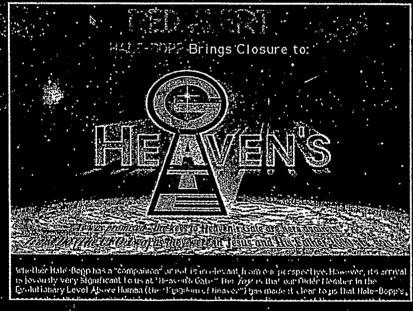


Earthly woes led many to space cult

Who the 39 were, 4-5A

When you look back, I guess you could see little cracks in the concrete.





Lost: Heaven's Gate logo, cult members clockwise from bottom left: Erika Ernst, Yvonne McCurdy-Hill, Lawrence Jackson Gale, Ladonna Ann Brugato, David Geoffery Moore, Raymond Alan Bowers.

Dana Tracey Abreo



Abreo: Half-brother had recruited her

For Abreo, 35, Heaven's Gate was a family affair.

Her halfbrother, Gary Jordan St. Louis, had persuaded her to join the cult that he belonged to. He also committed suicide.

She grew up in Twain Harte, Calif., and moved to Denver after high

school to attend paralegal school. She lived in a number of apartments in the east Capitol Hill area from 1990 to 1993.

'As soon as I heard it, I knew it was them," said Guy St. Louis, Abreo's other half-brother. "To them, it was the only way to leave the planet — to leave their bodies behind and escape."

Robert John Arancio

Arancio, 46, apparently handled some of

the recruiting business for Heaven's Gate. Dallas County, Texas, records show that he and fellow cult member Cheryl Butcher received business permits in August 1993 for Total Overcomers Anonymous — the name that cult leader Marshall Herff Applewhite used for his group then — and Omega Agency. The businesses sent out recruitment videos featuring Applewhite's smiling face and soft, reassuring voice.

Arancio used a Richardson, Texas, post office box for business and a Mail Boxes Etc. store in Dallas as his home address.

Raymond Alan Bowers



Bowers: Devastated by family problems

Bowers, 45, was a depressed, downtrodden guitar player when he joined Heaven's Gate 18 months ago. His wife had divorced him, and his brother had drowned in a freak accident while they were working as com-mercial fishers in Connecticut.

Devastated; Bowers left his

family and business and headed to south Florida. He lived with a former owner of the Depot Bar and Grill in Jupiter, where he occasionally performed. His friends say he had musical talent but little hope for the future. Bowers moved into a garage apartment in a wooded, rural area north of Jupiter. But after a few months he skipped out on his rent and disappeared.

"Nothing made him happy," landlord Margo Bruvnel said.

Bowers was happiest when playing his guitar and jamming with Denny Nickeson. Nickeson and his wife, Karin, befriended Bowers. But when it came time to leave, Bowers told the Nickesons, "'I don't keep in touch with friends. I've been hurt too badly before," Karin said. "We never heard from him again. It doesn't surprise me. He was lost. He cried all the time. I don't think life meant much for him.

Bowers was arrested once in October 1994 in Florida for possessing cocaine.

Susan Ventulett, Bowers' sister, said her brother first met members of Applewhite's cult 22 years ago during a lecture at Stanford University. When he ran into them again in 1995, he joined.

"He was a spiritual person who saw good in everybody," Ventulett said.

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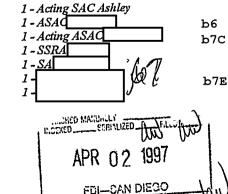
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Ladonna Ann Brugato



Brugato: May have been on spiritual quest

Brugato, 40, was rarely heard from again after joining Heaven's Gate three years ago. She was one of nine children of a Newberg, Ore., real estate agent and a math teacher, and she had been a computer programmer in Englewood, Colo.

Brugato, also a talented violin-

ist, may have been on a spiritual quest before joining the cult.

Her former landlord, Al Wallace, said Brugato's canopy bed had diamond-shaped crystals on each corner. Another large crys-

tal hung from the ceiling.

"It clearly left me with the impression that this was some New Age experimental worship place that she used to commune with her gods," Wallace said.

Joe Brugato said his daughter joined Applewhite's group "at a very vulnerable time

in her life."

She gave her family little information about the group, or what she was doing. In just two letters to her family Brugato described herself "as a traveling minister." She emphasized she was very happy with God, her father said.

He hired private investigator Gary Crowe

to help find her. Crowe said that given another week, he probably would have found her alive. He had tracked her to an address, a mailbox company, in La Jolla, Calif., 10 miles from the suicide scene.

Margaret June Bull



Bull: One of Applewhite's first followers

"Peggy" Bull, 53, joined Applewhite as one of his original followers in the mid-1970s, after graduating from the University of Washington and teaching English in Barcelona, Spain.

"I thought it was harmless," said her brother, John Bull, assistant dean for continuing edu-

cation at Central Washington University.
"But when we received a video from

Peggy that had (Applewhite) declaring himself the second coming of Christ and that he intended to lead his flock to redemption, I got a real bad feeling then," he said.

Peggy Bull last returned to Ellensburg, Wash., where she grew up, three years ago when her mother died.

Gwen Sorensen was a year behind Peggy in school but rode horses with her in the Wranglerette Riding Club.

"I didn't know Peggy real well, but I knew her enough to know she was a genuinely nice person," Sorensen told *The* (Ellensburg) *Daily Record*. "It surprises me she would do this because she just didn't seem to be the type."

Cheryl Elaine Butcher

Butcher, 43, left Springfield, Mo., in 1976 to take up with a group in Oregon led by Applewhite.

"She didn't call it a cult. She didn't consider it as a cult. She was happy," said her mother, Virginia Norton, of Springfield.

Norton said her daughter never men-

tioned suicide pacts or beliefs in UFOs.

Mother and daughter last saw each other in 1993 in Dallas. Butcher was living there with other members of the cult, which then called itself Total Overcomers Anonymous.

Norton tried to contact Butcher over the years, but Christmas cards and notes came back unopened.

"She was with me for 21 years, and with the group for 21 years," Norton said.

Michael Howard Carrier

Carrier, 48, listed as his address a Pack 'N Mail store in the Dallas suburb of Richardson, Texas. This is the same address that fellow cult members Peggy Bull and Gary St. Louis also used. No other information was available.

Suzanne Sylvia Cocke

Cooke, 54, was carrying a New Mexico driver's license when she committed suicide with other members of Heaven's Gate.

But she had no family in New Mexico. She did, however, live with other cult members until last year at a 40-acre youth camp Manzano, N.M. ne camp had a huge structure with walls made of old tires. They called it "Earth Ship."

Betty Eldrie Deal

Few details of Deal's life have emerged. Her last known address was a Mail Boxes Etc. store in Far North Dallas. At 64, Deal was among the oldest to die.

Erika Ernst



Ernst: Joined cult shortly after high school

Ernst, 40, was a native of Calgary, Canada.
Described by friends as a good student and funloving teen-ager, she joined the cult shortly after graduating from high school.

She gave away her possessions, left Calgary and cut off contact with her past.

Her family,

which knew she was with the Heaven's Gate cult, was vacationing in Los Angeles when they heard of the mass suicide. Her father, Edwald Ernst, drove to the coroner's office to claim her body.

"For 21 years, I tried to find them," he said. "We had one visit, maybe one phone call. She told us only that 'I'm doing the best; I'm happy.' But I think she was brainwashed."

Lawrence Jackson Gale

The driver's license of Gale, 47, lists his address as Lake Forest, Calif.

Darwin Lee Johnson



Johnson: Band sang about death and aliens

Johnson, 42, was a musician and played in a band called Dharma Combat, former band manager David Fratt told a Salt Lake City television station.

Fratt said the band, which played at area clubs, wrote songs about death and aliens.

Julie LaMontagne



LaMontagne: Joined in Amherst, Mass., in 1975

LaMontagne, 45, lived most recently in Las Cruces, N.M. She was a gifted nurse whose world collapsed with the death of her father two decades ago.

. Her father
"was her knight
in shining armor," said her
brother, Andrew
LaMontagne of
Windsor, Vt.
"When he

passed away, Julie just freaked out. And then she met those people, and it was all over."

Ann Sheridan, assistant dean at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, recalled LaMontagne as a dean's list student with a love of nursing. She graduated in 1974, but her father's death soon after derailed her nursing career.

LaMontagne joined the cult as a personal nurse to Applewhite after the group recruited in Amherst in 1975. She wrote later that she wanted nothing more to do with her family. They last saw her in 1990.

LaMontagne's brother blamed Applewhite: "Look at the guy, he looks like a lunatic. He's a monster."

Jackie Leonard



Denver Post via AP Leonard: Always a restlessness about her

At 72, Leonard was the oldest among the dead and seemingly among the least likely to join a cult.

Leonard grew up in Des Moines and raised two daughters and a son there with her husband.

In the early 1970s, she moved to Colorado, where she

met members of the cult. A few years later she decided to join the group, a move that shocked her family.

"Grandmothers don't run away. The kids are supposed to run away," said her son-inlaw, Angelo Bellizzi of Seattle.

Yet, Bellizzi said, there was always a restlessness about Leonard.

"She was always groping and looking for something that interested her," he said.

Continued on next page ▶

Yvonne McCurdy-Hill



McCurdy-Hill: Left her five children

McCurdy-Hill. 39, was a Cincinnati postal worker and computer buff who learned about the cult from the Internet.

To join the group, she and her husband left everything behind in September, including their five children. Her husband, Steve Hill, went with her

but returned home before the suicide. Friends and co-workers of McCurdy-Hill described her as an outgoing, cheerful person who showed no signs of inner turmoil

until shortly before she left to join the cult. Steve Hill's mother said her son and daughter-in-law became secretive. They said they were leaving, but they wouldn't

say where they were going.
In August, Eartha Hill took the couple's children, including their newborn twins. "I couldn't leave them in that house," Eartha Hill said. She said as much to her daughterin-law. The younger woman's response: "She said, 'Here, they're yours.'

David Geoffery Moore

Moore, 40, grew up near San Jose, Calif. He fell in with the cult in 1975 as a disaffected 19-year-old and saw his family just twice after that.

His mother, Nancie Brown, described her son as an emotional, often angry teenager. She said he struggled to find a future for himself until he attended his first cult meeting in a neighborhood park.

Alarmed, Brown began researching the cult and even published a newsletter about the group. The publicity prompted her son to call Brown to say the cult did not want to

be in the spotlight.

"And I said, 'Fine. We don't want to interfere with you. We just want the occasional contact. We want to know you're all right." Brown told The New York Times.

Nancy Dianne Nelson



Nelson: Told co-workers she was a nun

Nelson, 45, told her Mesa. Ariz., co-workers she was a nun who lived in a monastery with two men who were highly knowledgeable about computers.

But her driver's license said Nelson lived in a mobile home. park in Scottsdale, Ariz.

In Mesa, she

worked for Richard Mickle, an osteopathic surgeon during periods in 1995 and 1996. Her co-workers knew her as "A.J."

Mickle knew nothing about Nelson's cult connection. Nor did he know about Nelson's intent to veer away in an endless space odyssey that would begin when the comet Hale-Bopp surfaced closer to Earth.

Norma Jeane Nelson

Nelson, 59, not only was a fan of the popular Star Trek movies, she believed she was from Star Trek. She once told a former

chbor in a North Dallas apartment complex that she was from The Next Generation TV series.

"We just looked at her in surprise," said Cynthia McGowan, the former neighbor. "It just didn't dawn on us that she was in a type of cult. We thought that maybe she was crazv.'

Thomas Nichols



Nichols: Brother of actress Nichelle Nichols

Nichols, 59, had a connection to the stars long before his final flight was supposed to take him beyond Earth. His sister, actress Nichelle Nichols, played Lt. Uhura on the original Star Trek television series.

Last week, she went on Larry King Live to talk about her broth-

er. In keeping with cult beliefs, he had cut off all communication with his family for 20 years.

Nichelle Nichols said her brother resurfaced when their mother died several years ago. He wanted to reassure relatives that he was well. In 1994, Thomas Nichols sought his sister's advice when the cult planned to go public.

"There's a tragic irony they should choose Hale-Bopp, this wonderful comet, this wonderful celestial event once in our lifetime, that it would be this event that would trigger their decision to leave their bodies, as they called it, to go on another plane," Nichelle Nichols said.

Susan Elizabeth Nora Pau

Paup, 54, had a favorite topic: UFOs. But for someone who believed in spacecrafts trailing comets en route to pick her up, she lived a very earthly existence.
In September 1995, she signed the lease

on a piece of property cult members used as a compound in Manzano, N.M., for

\$3,400 a month.

In April 1996, Heaven's Gate members

suddenly left the area.
"It's shocking. They were very, very, very nice people. They were always smiling," said Patsy Gustin, who rented three offices for \$250 a month to the group.

Gustin cried last week when she saw her ex-tenants saying goodbye on television.

Paup also had befriended Rachel Heard, 11, whose mother worked nearby. Rachel said she would sit by the computer while "Nora" worked, and that they would chat about UFOs.

Margaret Ella Richter



Richter: Two visits home in 22 years

Richter, 46, of Oroville, Ćalif., began to separate from her " family soon after her 3-year-old marriage failed in 1975.

She went to Los Angeles and earned a master's degree in computer science at UCLA. But for the next 22 years, relatives say, she came home for

visits only twice.

Her sister, Jean Long, said Richter sent family members a "recruitment tape" that explained the cult's beliefs and asked the viewer to join.

Richter also "would write letters and she was concerned for us," Long said. "It never sounded like they were going to hurt themselves. . . . It never sounded violent."

For Long, the separation was hard because she had always idolized her sister. "She was so smart," Long said.

Richter, whose maiden name was Field, graduated from Las Plumas High School in Oroville in 1969. She was class valedictorian, a Presidential Scholar and a National Merit Scholarship winner.

"She just had this extreme mental power," said Jane Hammer, her high school counselor. "She was involved in all these things. She was very friendly, very open and very outgoing."

Company of the Judith Ann Rowland

David Cabot Van Sinderen



Van Sinderen: Arranged a family reunion

Van Sinderen. 48, was the son of the former chairman and CEO of South New England Telephone Co., the oldest local telephone company in the nation.

His father, Alfred White Van Sinderen, 72, of Woodbridge, Conn., is an alumnus of Yale University and

of Harvard University's business school.

Van Sinderen is the second-oldest of six children. His parents divorced when he was a teen-ager.

He was the third generation of his family to attend the Gunnery, a Connecticut boarding school. He graduated in 1966 and attended college at Oregon State in Corvalis. He later worked in park and forest conservation jobs.

In 1976, he saw a flier for the cult, attended a meeting and joined the group that has come to be known as Heaven's Gate.

He traveled with fellow members in Arizona, Colorado and Texas. He also was an officer of two Dallas-based companies tied to the cult during the mid-1980s.

In June 1995 he purchased property on a 40-acre former youth camp near Manzano. N.M., according to an official of the insurance company that sold the property.

Members of the cult lived at the former camp until about eight months ago.

Family members said they had seen Van Sinderen only about four times since he joined the cult, including a family reunion he arranged in 1985. The family is planning a memorial service.

While we did not completely understand or agree with David's beliefs, it was apparent to us that he was happy, healthy and acting under his own volition," a family statement said.

"He always tried to reassure us not to worry about him. . . . He dealt with us honestly and we respected his wishes."

Unidentified

Medical examiners have not confirmed identities of four Heaven's Gate members who committed suicide last Wednesday. What is known about them:

► A man, 50, was born in New York and died with an Arizona driver's license and a passport issued in Los Angeles.

► A woman, 63, had a driver's license with an Albuquerque address.

► A man, 44, was born in Michigan and died with a Minnesota driver's license and a passport issued in Los Angeles.

A woman, 41, born in Texas, died with a passport issued in Seattle.

Contributing: Carol J. Castaneda, Tom Curley, Gale Holland, Linda Kanamine, Jonathan T. Lovitt, Patrick O'Driscoll, Richard Price, Dawnya Pring, Tom Squitieri, The Associated Press and Reuters.

Michael Barr Sandoe

Sandoe, 26, was so well-liked at his Abingdon, Va., high school that he was easily elected senior class president.

Sandoe came from a good family. He attended meetings of the French Club and the Key Club, a civic organization for young

people. His father was a minister.

Family and friends say the change in his life may have come during Sandoe's time in the Army. Sandoe was a paratrooper and Ranger who served in the Middle East during Desert Storm in 1991.

"People say there were lots of changes after he came back from Desert Storm," said Jenni Markham of Abingdon, Va. Markham's son Shannon, also 26, was friends with Sandoe. "He was always laughing, having fun. He was never serious," she said. "He didn't get into trouble."

His mother, JoAnne Sandoe, said he "worked and traveled" after he left the Army. She had no idea he was involved with the Heaven's Gate cult. Nor, apparently, did many in their town of 7,000 near the Tennessee border. "It's just something we don't believe," Markham said. "Everyone is very emotional about it."

Brian Alan Schaaf

Schaaf, 39, listed a KOA campground in Las Cruces, N.M., as his last known address.

Joyce Angela Skalla

Skalla, 57, used a Santa Fe address.

Gary Jordan St. Louis



St. Louis: 'I have chosen to leave'

St. Louis, 44, was president of his junior class. But he changed after graduating in 1971 from Downey High School in Modes to, Calif.

"He kind of

flipped out," sai Vicki Zaiger, a family friend. "He was brillian with computers

with computers and he worked for the government in Colora-

do for a while. But he was secretive and didn't keep in touch with his parents."

St. Louis, who had a New Mexico driver's license, was a longtime cult member. He played a leading role in Heaven's Gate. He

convinced his half-sister, Dana Abreo, of Denver, to join the group. She too died.

His brother, Guy St. Louis, joined the cult for a short time in 1974 but soon left. "It just wasn't for me. I guess I kept my feet on the ground." he said.

the ground," he said.

Gary St. Louis left a tape behind with his former girlfriend, Shelly King of Hayden Lake, Idaho, explaining his decision to board a spaceship to a higher place.

"I want everybody who may see this, or to know, that I have chosen to leave," he said. "I want to rejoin my Heavenly Father, and my classmates, the students of my Heavenly Father."

Susan Frances Strom



Strom: Planned a career in botany

Strom, 44, was the daughter of retired U.S. District Judge Lyle Strom of Omaha, Neb. She loved plants, animals and the Earth, and she had planned a career in botany.

Strom graduated from Omaha's all-girl Marian High School in in 1971. She was remembered in school

as athletic and intelligent.

Strom attended Oregon State University in Corvallis, Ore. But in 1975, one year before graduation, she turned to the cult.

Lyle Strom last saw his daughter in 1987. He said he hadn't spoken with her recently. He thought her cult membership was just a phase.

"I thought, sure it would be short-lived and she would be back home. I have no answers. It did not seem consistent with her character and personality."

Strom, the second-oldest in a family of seven, was the only one of her father's children not in attendance when he was sworn in as a U.S. District judge in 1985.

Denise June Thurman

Thurman, 44, gave Austin, Texas, as the address on her license.

Jeffrey Howard Lewis

Lewis, 41, was a former massage therapist from San Antonio who cut off his beard and dreadlocks to join the clean-shaven cult.

Although Lewis' relatives knew he was a member of a UFO-related cult, they did not at first think he was part of the Heaven's Gate suicides. Jerry Lewis, his brother, told the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal, "It did remind us of his situation, but we didn't realize he was connected with them."

Lewis said his brother joined in the mid-'70s, after Navy duty in San Diego, and was a member for about 10 years. After being out of the group for years, he rejoined three years ago. "Even when he was out of the cult, he talked about it a lot," Jerry Lewis said. "He had a lot of emotional ties, and he felt he didn't have the meaning that he had when he was in the group."

Gail Renee Maeder



Maeder: 'They promised her she would never die'

Maeder, 27, wanted to live forever. And the cult told her that she would.

"They promised her she would never die," her mother Alice Maeder said. "Her mind was controlled."

Maeder left Sag Harbor, N.Y., five years ago, moving to California with her boyfriend.

"At first she seemed happy," said her father, Robert Maeder. "But then she broke up with her boyfriend, lost her business and fell in with the wrong crowd."

Though terribly worried, Maeder's parents feared that she would cut off all contact with her family if they criticized her decision to join the cult.

Maeder stopped calling about six months after she joined, but she sent cards for Christmas, birthdays and her brother's high school graduation. "If only I had seen what was down the road, I would have pulled her back from California before she got involved," Alice Maeder said. "I never believed I'd never see my daughter again."

Steven Terry McCarter

McCarter, 41, listed his address as Albuquerque, N.M.

Joel Peter McCormick



McComick: Growing 'toward future,' he wrote

When McCormick's roommates called in 1994 to tell his mother they hadn't seen him for 10 days, Megan McCormick drove nonstop from Madison, Wis., to Seattle to find her son.

When she arrived, Megan McCormick discovered her son had left to join the UFO cult

then known as Total Overcomers. McCormick, 29, later wrote his mother saying, "I'm doing fine and continue to grow toward the future."

rom opera singer to cult leader

Marshall Herff Applewhite, known since he was a child as "Herff," was the son of a Presbyterian minister who studied for the ministry before turning first to

music, then to a cult.

The co-founder and leader of Heaven's Gate was a trained baritone who performed in the Houston Grand Opera and spent years as a voice teacher and choir director in several places. At some point, he married and had two children, but he divorced his wife about 35 years ago and

left his family.

"We're of mixed emotions," said his son, Mark Applewhite, 40, who hadn't seen his father since he was 5. "I am deeply hurt by the knowledge that people have now lost their lives in connection with my father. My father is dead. That's painful. It's sort of like we've been through a grieving process and now we're

seeking closure."

Applewhite, 65, was born in Spur, Texas, about 240 miles west of Dallas, on May 17, 1931. He graduated from high school in Corpus Christi in 1948 and later studied briefly to become a minister at the Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Va., before switching to music. Applewhite was a 1952 graduate of Austin College in Sherman, Texas. He earned a master's degree in music from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 1959.

In 1953 he was recruited to become choral director at the First Prebyterian Church in Gastonia, N.C. In 1954 he was drafted and spent two years in Salzburg, Austria, and White Sands, N.M., with the Army Signal Corps. Applewhite later received an honorable discharge.

He and his wife, Ann, moved in 1961 so he could teach chorus and voice at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

"He was very likable, very friendly, but very egotistical," said Steve Sample, who knew Applewhite from 1961 to 1964. "There was never any doubt who was the star when he was involved with you."

Applewhite had a flair for entertaining, said piano teacher Byrnell Figler, a friend and colleague. He said the Applewhites were a model family - an outgoing husband, a pretty and modest wife, and two children, a boy and girl. They lived in a home next to a babbling brook. "The faculty would come by and have picnics there. He was very sociable."

Applewhite taught music from 1966 to 1970 at the University of St. Thomas in Houston. Various reports said he was fired for having an affair with a male student. He was terminated for "health problems of an emotional nature," according to a 1975 newspaper article.

Applewhite also sang 10 roles with the Houston Grand Opera from 1964 to 1968. He attracted praise for his work as "Wagner" in a production of Faust, which starred Placido Domingo, and his role of "Father" in Hansel and Gretel.

.Figler said Applewhite left Houston on a sabbatical that took him to Taos, N.M., and other sites. They lost touch. Applewhite helped open a restaurant in Taos

and a bar a few blocks away.

In 1972, the elder Applewhite met the late Bonnie Lu Nettles, a nurse with whom he started the group that would become Heaven's Gate.

They had a mutual interest in astrology. She had been married with four children. She left medicine to be an astrologer. It was at this time that Applewhite reportedly had some type of heart blockage and had a "near-death" experience.

The duo moved to Las Vegas, making crosses for a religious store there. They then moved to Oregon, where they had their spiritual awakening.

In Aug. 24, 1974, Applewhite was arrested for auto theft in Harlingen, Texas. He was also arrested on charges of steal-

ing credit cards.

At some point in the 1970s, he had him-

self castrated.

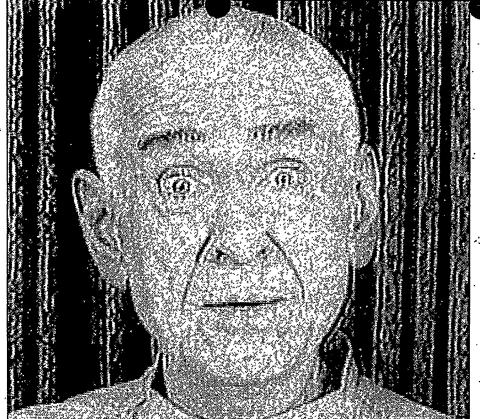
Figler, retired from Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kan., said the last he had heard about Applewhite — until last week - was from news reports. A nationally televised CBS report in the late 1970s criticized Applewhite and Nettles, called Bo and Peep, and their cult.

"He was sort of a restless person. I asked him once what he would really like

to do," Figler said.

"He said he'd like to have some sort of ranch or place, like a spa, where people could come for renewing themselves physically and spiritually."

From staff and wire reports



Last days: Heaven's Gate cult leader Marshall Herff Applewhite, also known as Do, was 65 when he died in the mass suicide. He described his philosophy in a videotape he left behind.



Opera work attracted praise: Applewhite, left, performs in the Houston Grand Opera via AP Opera work attracted praise: Applewhite, left, performs in the Houston Grand Opera's 1966 production of Hansel and Gretel. The baritone sang 10 opera roles from 1964 to 1968.



As a child: Applewhite lived in Spur, Texas, west of Dallas, and later in Corpus Christi.



In 1963: Applewhite directed choral groups at the University of Alabama.



in 1972: Applewhite lived with fellow preacher Bonnie Lu Nettles in Houston.

Rugged 'Marlboro Man' never told his family why

By Patrick O'Driscoll USA TODAY

ALBUQUERQUE — For most of his 63 years, John "Mickey" Craig was never far from the enchanted wilds that surround this New Mexico city of his youth.

Tall, handsome and rugged, he fit perfectly into the West's mythical Marlboro Country landscape, even working as a cowboy extra in the 1969 movie Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

Craig's all-American normalcy — father of six, successful businessman, admired citizen — makes it that much harder to understand why he and 38 other ordinary and extraordinary souls embraced such a shocking end in the mass suicide of their Heaven's Gate cult.

It was a hot summer in 1975 when Craig abandoned-his family in Durango, Colo., adopting the cult as his new family and roaming the forests and deserts of the Mountain West in search of mystic rebirth. He became Roger Logan and served as second-in-command.

Now, when the Southern Rockies' winter snows finally melt, Craig's estranged but grieving children may return the cremated remains of his human "container" to the Four Corners wilderness he loved.

"There are special places for our family in the high country that aren't accessible right now," says his oldest daughter, Cathy Craig Murphy, 40.

She was a college freshman when her dad abruptly left his family, friends and a "visionary" land-development business to join the nomadic tribe led by Marshall Applewhite and Bonnie Lu Nettles.

It seemed an outlandish act for a bright developer who had once run for the Colorado Legislature and who cut a handsome, down-home figure.

"He was the perfect cowboy. He would always dress like the Marlboro Man," recalls Durango banker R.W. "Nick" Turner Jr., once a close friend.

Shortly before dropping out, Craig charted Turner's private plane to visit a psychic or astrologer in Phoenix. "He was obviously searching for something," says Turner, who attended the same New Mexico military academy as Craig, son of a prominent Albuquerque family.

Mickey Craig's strange journey began 22 years ago in a chance meeting. The Craig family once owned a dude ranch, and a man who had stayed there came by to visit in the summer of 1975. The family no longer owned the ranch, so Craig invited the man and his female friend to spend the night. The man was a member of Applewhite's cult.

"He stayed up talking to them almost all night long," Cathy Craig Murphy says. "They left the next morning, and he followed them to Denver a few days later."

Craig never told his wife, Mary Ann, except in a note left while she was away with the other children at a swim meet. But he confided in his daughter Cathy over lunch, suggesting she join as well. She had no interest but accepted that her dad needed to somehow sort out his life.

"You're not thinking in terms of, 'I'm never going to see you again,' "Murphy says now. "I was an 18-year-old daughter who idolized her father."

Back at Colorado College in Colorado Springs that fall, two cult emissaries invited her to a meeting in Denver. She went, with an acquaintance posing as



In 1970: John 'Mickey' Craig holds a 16-inch trout in Durango, Colo.

her boyfriend to make sure she wasn't abducted, but was "very under-impressed" with Applewhite's talk. She left in a daze, prevented by cult members from even walking her father to the car.

Mary Ann Craig divorced her missing husband two years later. The children grew into their teens and adulthood.

"It was just hanging," Murphy says.
"And there was still a question of, you know, was he right? It seems probably crazy to people now, but I had so much faith in him."

Ten years after joining the cult, Craig broke the silence in a phone call to his daughter. It was shortly after the death in 1985 of cult co-founder Nettles.

"He wanted to come and meet with the six of us (children). He did not want my mother to know," she says. For a day and a half, they all met in a

For a day and a half, they all met in a ski condo near Farmington, N.M. There were flashes of anger and pain but few answers. "It was stressful and emotional, and also very odd," Murphy remembers. "He talked about what he was doing, but not about why."

He told of a hand-to-mouth life, sometimes sleeping in church basements or showering in motel rooms after guests departed but before the maids arrived. And he spoke of his body as a "vehicle" he had to keep in good working order.

Two years later, he phoned Murphy

Two years later, he phoned Murphy again, the last time she heard her father's voice. "I had to think of it as, 'My dad has died,'" she says. "But I was unsuccessful."

Then came the news report Thursday that the suicide group was led by a man called Do. "I knew," she says. A coroner's call at 1:30 a.m. Friday brought confirmation and a new wave of grief.

"It's not even grieving all over again. It's just the beginning of grief," Murphy says. She says her mother has said Craig "died for her a long time ago, but I don't really believe that."

Murphy never faced closure until now. "I don't know that I ever ran an ending through my head," she says of her father's life, "but I certainly never expected it would end up on Nightline."

Contributing: Kristen Hartzell

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

> San Diego Union-Tribune San Diego, CA

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"No signs of cancer found in cult leader'

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No signs of cancer found in cult leader

spite media reports that Heaven's Gate cult leader Marshall Applewhite was dying of cancer, county Medical Examiner Brian Blackbourne said vesterday that an autopsy found no signs of malignancy.

There were no visible signs of cancer whatsoever," Black bourne said during a brief conversation with reporters. He added that pathologists did find signs of coronary artery disease, but he noted that such a condition was common in a man of Applewhite's

The Medical Examiner's Office said the families of all but three offine 39 people who committed suicide last week had been notified. Six bodies were shipped from the office yesterday.

Other developments:

Ex mèmber explains pôcket money. În interviews yesterday with KQED-EM of San Francisco, former Heaven's Gate member Nick Cooke said he knew why the cult members bodies were found with a \$5 bill and quarters in their pockets; Well, whenever we went to a movie or went out for any reason we always took \$5 and change. In case we suddenly needed to use the telephone, we had a quaiter or two in our pocket. We had \$5 in case the car broke *down and for some reason we needed a taxi."

Cooke said he left the cult three years ago. His wife, Suzanne Sylvia Cooke, 54, was among the Heaven's Gate members found dead last week. Nick Cooke, of Sausalito, told "60 Minutes" he was sorry he did not die with his wife.

NASA retrieves object: KOB-TV Channel 4 in Albuquerque, N.M. reported last night that NASA officials went to the Mountainair area of New Mexico, near where the Heaven's Gate cult once had a compound, to refrieve an object which fell from the sky. The station said NASA refused to release any details other than that the object was a gondola from a test balloon.

Applewhite grave site chosen: Cult leader Applewhite will be buried in San Antonio, his sister said, in a grave next to his father, M.H. Applewhite Sr. The sister, Louise Winant, said the younger Applewhite had lived in San Antonio when his father, a preacher, joined Westminster Presbyterian Church. The elder Applewhite shared in organizing and building about 20 Texas churches, she

Insured against abduction. The cult members who committed suicide had insured themselves against being abducted, impreg nated or killed by space aliens, an insurance agent who specializes

in unusual policies said yesterday. The cult bought a policy Oct. 10 that would pay \$1 million to each member's beneficiaries, Simon Burgess, managing director of Goodfellow Rebecca Ingrams Pearson, an insurance brokerage, told Press Association, the British news agency. The brokerage said it has insured 4,000 people against abduction by aliens, but there has never been a genuine claim for alien abduction."

Athletic footwear explained: Why the brand new, black Nike athletic shoes on all the dead? A former longtime Heaven's Gate member, identified only as Sawyer, told "60 Minutes" it was "representative of moving into the next level, being fresh and clean." Sawyer told the television news magazine that while he was in the group he contemplated being castrated, but flipped a coin and castration lost. The county medical examiner said Friday that six of the 18 men who committed suicide had been castrated.

From staff reports and Union Tribune news services.

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EASTER AFTER HEAVEN'S GATE

Celebration is traditional, yet not quite

aster dawned yesterday to alleluias and trumpets across San Diego County. Just as in years past.

And just as in years past, Christians donned blankets and coats for sunrise services and dressed up in heels and hats, and suits and ties, to go to sanctuaries blooming with lilies.

But this Easter, for some, was different. This was the first Sunday after Heaven's

Story was reported and written by Sandi Dolbee, Sharon L. Jones, Jeanne F. Brooks and Susan Gembrowski. Gate. The first Sunday after the revelation that 39 men and women had taken their lives in Rancho Santa Fe, victims of a cult who believed that salvation would come from a spaceship.

Some congregations offered prayers, others contrasted the hope of Easter with the pain of the mass suicide, and still others chose to focus not on the news but on the holiday.

Here is a look at how some Christians celebrated Easter in San Diego County this year.

See SERVICES on Page A-4

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

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"Celebration is traditional, yet not quite"

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Must sign agreements acknowledging other tribe's claims or move

By Michelle Boorstein ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHOENIX — Late-night consultations with medicine men. Frantically calls to lawyers. Religious cerentonies seeking spiritual guidance. The clock is ticking louder and louder for hundreds of Navajos living on Hopi land.

Navajo families have until midnight tonight to either sign leases, acknowledging the land in northern Arizona is Hopi or put themselves in line for eviction.

After decades of fighting over the rugged patch of desert, the decision is an agonizing one. With dozens of overlapping lawsuits continuing legal developments in federal court and lawyers coming on and off the case, Navajos sayi they don't know whose advice to take.

"One person in the family wants," to sign because they're scared and another says they shouldn't. I don't trust the attorney, I don't trust the Hopi Council. I don't know what to believe at this point," said Lisa Tso, whose family lives on the Hopi reservation. "People are running, around pretty sad, confused, stressed, fearful."

Lawyers and leaders from both tribes and government officials, have been trekking to one remote; hogan after another to explain the lease and advise people on their legal options. In many families, the elders making the decision do not; speak English and are unskilled in non-Indian law.

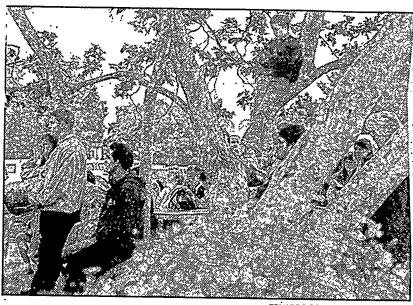
Rumors abound about the lease agreement and whether the Höpi will limit the Navajos' agricultural or religious life. While the land was legally declared Hopi more than 20 years ago, the case has been tied up in the courts since then.

"People are being given all kinds; of false hope. They're being told its would be too much of a public embarrassment for there to be evictions of Native Americans on U.S. soil and that Congress will step in They're being told the United Nations will step in or the World.

The big sanctuary of Bayview Baptist Church in Encanto was packed for all three services Easter Sunday. The ushers opened the balcony each time, and that filled, too. h Between services, people met in the foyer and on the church steps, 'greeting one another with handshakes, excited talk and hugs. cometimes, so enthusiastic the silk sflowers on women's hats bobbed. we Two little girls in matching pink dresses trimmed with pink satin ribbon held hands on their way into the sanctuary, self-conscious of their finery but also clearly proud. A boy of about 7, shy in his new suit and tie, poked a finger inside the starched white collar of his shirt land tugged it away from his neck. En An organ summoned the faithful down the red carpet to the pews with a soft, slightly jazzy riff. Behind the pulpit, ready for the choir, were also a piano player, a drumfiner and a stand of silver microphones.

When the congregation was settled, the choir — nearly 60 voices strong — filed two-by-two down the center aisle, long beige robes swaying.

The Rev. Timothy Winters be-



EDUARDO CONTRERAS/Union-Tribune

Morning glory: Christians gathered at the El Camino Memorial Park for Easter sunrise services presided over by the Rev. Mike McCassey, pastor of Grossmont Baptist Church.

gan his sermon with force. "I am about us getting our name back for this day!" he told his parishioners. "I don't like what the world has done with Easter. . . . We celebrate the Lord's resurrection week by week by week."

He talked about prophesies that three days would pass between Christ's death and resurrection, and how that was what happened.

"That's easier for me to believe than a spaceship flying in the afterglow of a meteorite," he said. Following the sermon, seven people joined the pastor at the altar to declare their acceptance of Christ.

In the church parking lot after

the service, Ethel Sims, 37, said what happened in Rancho Santa Fe was sad. "It doesn't make spiritual sense and it doesn't make common sense," she said.

"It's a wake-up call, too." She wondered, "Are we really spreading the word like we need to so people don't worry about the idiotic things?"

Nearly 1,000 people celebrated outdoors at the Horizon Christian Fellowship's 10 a.m. service in Rancho Santa Fe, where the Rev. Bob Botsford contrasted the celebration of Jesus' life with the de-

struction of life by the Heaven's Gate cult.

Botsford called children forward during the service and handed each a rock, which represented the sturdy foundation of the Christian faith.

People need to ground their faith "not on some comet, not on some UFO, but on God of gods, King of kings," Botsford said. "Jesus said, 'I am the gate.' There is no other gate."

After the service, Oakland Raiders defensive back Darren Carrington, a Poway resident and former San Diego Charger, said cult members weren't following God's word.

"It's really important for people to know the difference between serving Jesus Christ and serving man," agreed Carrington's wife, Vickie. "The situation at Heaven's Gate served man. They loved their leader, not God."

Botsford said he received a call from a friend Wednesday afternoon about the deaths and immediately went to the estate.

"Tragedies like this bring a community together," Botsford said. "We become more sensitive to our loved ones and those we have been estranged from."

The tragedy for him was that he didn't know the people who died in the rented mansion on Colina Norte. "If only they were shown (God's love), they would not have been waiting for what was beyond the Hale-Bopp comet."

The sun was up at 6:30 a.m., but hidden behind clouds. This year,

Easter fell before the switch to daylight-saving time, so the sunrise service at El Camino Memorial Park began long after daybreak.

That was just fine with Debbi New of Mira Mesa, a regular at the outdoor service because the scenic setting reminded her of mountaintop Easter services with her parents in her native Oregon.

The service was co-sponsored by the San Diego Southern Baptist Association, but it drew worshipers from many denominations. New, for example, is Episcopalian.

The Rev. Mike McCassey, pastor of Grossmont Baptist Church, told worshipers that Jesus Christ's death ensures that no one will be judged harshly for their sins when they face their Lord.

"He who has died is freed from sin," he said, facing his seated audience and, beyond them, rolling hills and rows of tombstones decorated with spring flowers.

It was a natural setting for a discussion of death, resurrection and life.

Familial ties brought many worshipers.

"My brother is buried here," as well as other relatives, said Chuck Manion of Bay Park, who has attended services here for 20 years. "We come to be with them and praise the Lord."

Bobby Janes and his mother, Eleanor Janes, placed Easter lilies on his father's grave site last week and then returned to the park yesterday for the service.

His mother rolled her wheelchair onto the grass, through some trees, stopping just behind the chairs. He hung back, near a road that winds through the Sorrento Valley cemetery.

Being at the cemetery brought comfort to Connie Veling. She was there with her family because her mother, Valerie Spencer, had been interred only a month ago. "It's helping us get through the holidays," she said.

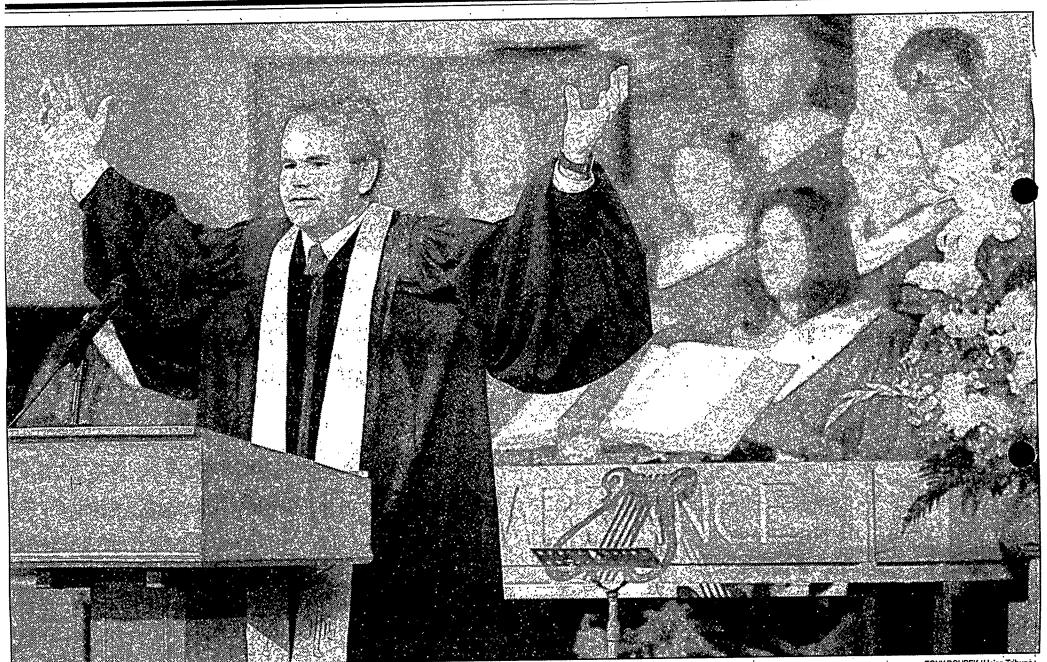
Toward the end of the 9 a.m. Mass, Monsignor Dennis R. Clark asked the standing-room-only crowd at the Roman Catholic Church of the Nativity in Rancho Santa Fe to pray for the dead.

"Especially those who died in our community this week," he said, as people intoned, "Lord, hear our prayer."

Clark emphasized that the tragedy could have happened anywhere and that devoting his Easter sermon to it was not the true purpose of the service.

Instead, he prepared a press release that said, in part: "We join with their families and friends in mourning the loss of the many loved ones who died so tragically in Rancho Santa Fe. We pray that, as we celebrate the Feast of the Resurrection, the Lord will help them find peace."

"These were spiritual people, but misguided," said Pat McConnin, who attended the Mass with her husband, two sons and daughter and son-in-law. "We all believe in the resurrection and I believe they are with God in heaven."



TONY DOUBEK / Union-Tribun

Easter in Rancho Santa Fe: The Rev. Paul Nelson led services yesterday at the Village Community Presbyterian Church. Part way through his sermon, he read a latter from Mark Applewhite, son of the leader of Heaven's Gate cult, who said he hadn't seen his father since he was 5 and was sorry for all who have suffered.

VICTIM UPDATE

Additional profiles of the dead

More pictures and biographical information about the victims of the victs suicide in Rancho Santa Fe is emerge daily. Here are the latest:

Suzanne Sylvia Cooke

54, New Mexico

Cooke is survived by her husband, Nick, who left the Heaven's Gate cult three years ago. She also had a daughter, Kelly.

Nick Cooke said he and his wife abandoned their daughter when they joined the cult 23 years ago. He said he was an "off and on" member of the cult, was sorry he missed the mass suicide and believed his wife reached her goal of joining a spaceship trailing the Hale-Bopp comet.

"I wish I had the strength to have remained ... to have stuck it out and gotten stronger and continued to be a part of that group," he told "60 Minutes."



Lawrence Jackson Gale 47, Lake Forest, Calif.



Darwin Lee Johnson 42, Orem, Utah

Johnson is shown in this 1994 photo as a member of a Utah band called Dharma Combat. Former band manager David Fratt said the band played in several clubs. The band's lyrics talked about death and aliens.

-- ASSOCIATED PRESS

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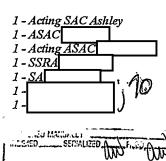
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APR 03 1997

FBI—SAN DIEGO

Mystics nothing new for old New Mexico

By Philip J. LaVelle, STAFF WRITER

MANZANO, N.M. — The reasons the Heaven's Gate cult was drawn to the highlands above this old Spanish settlement may be lost to the ages, but this much is clear: The figurative path its members followed into New Mexico is well-worn.

For years now, New Mexico — whose motto is the "Land of Enchantment" — has attracted all manner of seekers, mystics and escapists from the right, the left, and beyond.

"This is a strange land where miracles are commonplace," Jack Kutz, author of "Mysteries & Miracles of New Mexico," said yesterday from his Albuquerque

See NEW MEXICO on Page A-5

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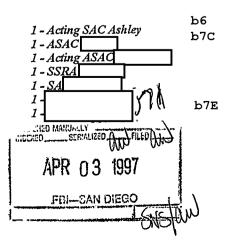
"Mystics nothing new for old New Mexico"

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New Mexico

Some in state brace for copter invasion

Continued from A-1

"It's difficult to sum the whole thing up. There is an aura over New Mexico. In everything from pre-Columbian times to this New Age, there's this mysticism. Things are constantly happening in New Mexico."

Something — the mountains, the sky, the vast, wild expanses — has drawn outsiders for generations to a place saturated with Native American and Hispanic folklore.

There are the chic New Age denizens of Santa Fe, the 387-year-old capital of New Mexico, now home to hundreds of artists and dozens of acupuncturists, holistic healers and herbalists.

There are the UFO hunters, lured by events such as the Roswell Incident, a 1947 crash near a southeast New Mexico town that con-'spiracy buffs think involved a downed UFO whose inhabitants and wreckage were quickly whisked away for storage at an Ohio Air Force base.

(The Air Force says it was a top-secret balloon designed to ply the upper atmosphere for evidence of atomic testing by the Soviets.)

There is also an angry underground of ultra-right paramilitary militiamen braced for invasion of a different sort - the impending airborne assault by shock troops of the New World Order, borne in black "helicopters under the United Nations' command.

Against such a backdrop, the Heaven's Gatè crew — a congregation of polite, clean-cut, UFO-seekling cultists, quietly running from a world controlled by satanic space aliens — did not seem that unusual, at least not at first blush.

"They were really nice people," said Larry Gustin, who rented office space next to his Gustin Hardware store in Mountainair, a ranching community south of Manzano, to the cult. They used it to do computer work.

"They were clean-cut, healthy . looking, but they didn't really fit in because of their dress," he said, noting that they wore dark joggingstyle nylon outfits.

The region they chose to live in during at least several months of 1995 — a mountainside above the Estancia Valley, which sweeps up toward the slopes of the Manzano Range along the western edge of the Great Plains — has attracted other sects seeking seclusion.

Outside Española, a Sikh temple



is maintained behind the privacy of an adobe wall. To the south, just a few miles north of Manzano at the end of a long, dusty road, live members of the Sufi Foundation, who practice a mystic form of Islam.

"This land is in transition," said Gary Swanson, a Chicago native who teaches high school history in . Mountainair.

Newcomers such as artists, mystics and refugees from the urban stress of California and elsewhere are slowly moving into these Wild West lands, where roots are deep.

"There are folks out here," Swanson said, "who are direct descendants of folks killed by Apaches."

Manzano to the north sits on land once under the authority of Spain, and even today Hispanic descendants are fighting to expand their share of Spanish land grants. On the grassy plain surrounding the village are remnants of the oldest apple orchards in America, planted by Franciscan friars in the 17th centu-

The Manzano Mountains hold evidence of New Mexico's tangible links to the heavens and to the

potential for apocalypse.

· These include the Starfire Optical Range, a facility that fires laser beams into the heavens, and underground bunkers carved into the mountainside above Kirtland Air Force Base, on the western slopes of the range, that once housed substantial portions of the United States' arsenal of nuclear warheads.

Top-secret work is part of New Mexico's heritage, including the Manhattan Project — the design and construction of the world's first atomic device at Los Alamos, later detonated at Trinity, a site near

"There is an aura over New Mexico."

JACK KUTZ Author

have heard for years; as well as state Route 666 — the "Devil's Highway" — a 90-mile, two-lane roadway that has claimed many lives, and that is alleged to draw Satan worshipers and witches in the dark of night.

But these tales of evil are accompanied by stories of miracles, including those reported worked in the north of the state at Santuarib de Chimayo, also known as the Lourdes of America, which draws thousands of pilgrims each Holy

And then there are the holy apparitions.

In 1977, a woman named Maria Rubio said she saw the face of Jesu's burned into a tortilla she had made. In 1980, paint peeling on a shed door in La Joya, south of Albuquerque, appeared to believers to be Christ and, in 1992, dust and stains on a lampshade in Las Cruces cast shadows that resembled the silhouette of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

We are a power point, like Sedona (Ariz.)," a tavern worker named "Flow" told The Albuquerque Tribune last week. "Probably the whole state of New Mexico is a

Or prone to undue mythology, said Kendrick Frazier, editor of the Skeptical Inquirer, a bimonthly publication dedicated to overturning pseudo-science.

'I don't think it's anything mystical in itself," Frazier said. "We have wide-open spaces; we have big skies; we have a relaxed lifestyle . . . places like this attract people of all sorts from all over the nation.'

Frazier, who edits the employee newspaper at Albuquerque's Sandia National Laboratories, the nation's nuclear-weapon engineering-research laboratory, said cults like Heaven's Gate are victims of "irrationality, ignorance and supersti-

"I think it's a shame when 'a whole group of people is lost due to the lack of critical thinking about the natural world and their place in it," he said.

Frazier said he would prefer that New Mexico be known as a leader in science and technology.

"We're a center of astronomy, defense technology, supercomputing and microelectronics," he said. "This isn't just a land of kooks." (15)

Alamogordo.

High-level science continues to be pursued here. On the Plains of San Augustin, west of Socorro, for example, the Very Large Array -27 massive antennas that perform as a 21-mile-wide telescope probes space in search of black

holes, galaxies and stars.

Such facilities help fuel the beliefs of UFO seekers, as do mysterious events such as cattle mutilations first found by ranchers in the 1970s. Although many people still suspect other-worldly causes, a weighty 1980 report rebutted such suspicions, concluding that the mutilations were caused by predators and scavengers.

New Mexico also has the Taos hum, a low-frequency sound that residents in the north of the state



SEAN M. HAFFEY / Union-Tribune

Recalls cult: Larry Gustin, owner of a hardware store in Mountainair, N.M., said the Heaven's Gate cult rented office space from him. He said they always paid in cash and were very nice people. "They were clean-cut, healthy looking, but they didn't really fit in because of their dress," he said, noting that they wore dark jogging-style nylon outfits.

Cultists sought their UFO using high-tech scope

By Kelly Thornton STAFF WRITER

Two Heaven's Gate cult members bought a \$3,645 state-of-the-art telescope from a local shop in January in hopes of spotting the space-ship that would whisk them into celestial paradise. They returned it a week later when they couldn't locate the elusive UFO.

"They were frustrated and disappointed," the clerk who made the sale said yesterday. "They obviously wanted to see (a spacecraft) and we just kind of shrugged our shoulders. We let them return it, and they left somewhat dejected."

The experience obviously did not shake the cult members' faith in spaceships or in the idea that they must shed their bodies, or "containers," in order to catch a ride on the mother ship in the Hale-Bopp comet's wake. Thirty-nine bodies, including those of the men who purchased the telescope six weeks earlier, were discovered Wednesday at a Rancho Santa Fe mansion.

The cult members drank a deadly mixture of phenobarbital and alcohol and then hastened death by suffocating themselves with plastic bags, the Medical Examiner's Office said.

. See TELESCOPE on Page A-5



CULT SUICIDE IN RANCHO SANTA FE

Inside

- Early follower: A Fallbrook resident was a member of Marshall Applewhite's cult in 1975. A-5
- Space brothers: Unarius Foundation in El Cajon, which for years has been talking to extraterrestrials, is getting extra attention. B-1
- Cult experts: They may not agree on the definition but they agree the menace is growing. E-1

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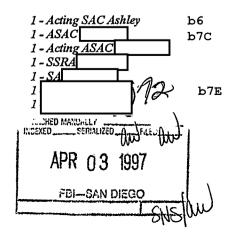
"Cultists sought their UFO using high-tech scope"

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Telescope

Cultists saw comet, but no spacecraft

Continued from A-1

"At least two of them knew for sure, without a doubt, that there was nothing following the comet, and they still chose to take their lives," said the clerk, who asked that his name and the name of his astronomy store not be identified.

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Sales receipts show the two telescope shoppers, who called themselves Brother Logan and Brother Hal, purchased the fully computerized, robot-style Meade 10-inch LX200 Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope Jan. 30 and returned it Feb. 7.

The clerk said he recognized one of the men - with "startling blue, glassy eyes" - on the television news recently as the group's leader, 65-year-old Marshall Applewhite. His companion bought the telescope with a credit card in the name of John M. Craig, also known as Logan Lahson.

Applewhite and Craig are listed among those who commit-

The high-tech telescope — almost the size of a refrigerator - can be programmed to find 64,351 celestial objects automatically. "It can find everything that's ever been cataloged in the sky," the clerk said.

Applewhite and Craig, who wore the buzz-style haircuts now associated with Heaven's Gate, came into the shop Jan. 28 and spent about 90 minutes with the salesperson learning about telescopes. The pair did not seem educated about astronomy, the clerk said.

For one thing, they seemed unfamiliar with the operation of a standard telescope, something amateur stargazers know. "They were like any Joe off the street who had watched 8,000 episodes of 'Star Trek' back-to-back," the clerk said.

They left without making a purchase, but returned two days later to buy one of the most expensive models in the store. The salesperson showed Craig and his companion how to set the telescope's coordinates to locate the Hale-Bopp comet.

"I said, 'Good luck. I hope you enjoy what you see,' " the clerk recalled. "A couple of days later, they called and were very frustrated, not in a mean kind of way. They said, Well, gosh, we found the comet, but we can't see anything following

The clerk said he now feels guilty about his response "I said in a joking way, 'Well, that's because there's nothing

The men returned the telescope for a refund on the credit card, less a 10 percent restocking fee.

The clerk said he did not think much about the couple after that. "We have had our share of interesting individuals with half-truths and wrong information," he said. "We don't try to

tread on personal beliefs."

Despite their ignorance in matters of the sky, he said, the men seemed intelligent and friendly but unyielding in their opinions. "These people came off as very well educated and very set in their ways, not willing to listen to anyone else," he "I went home and said goodbye to my mother and family. They thought I was nuts." LESLIE LIGHT

Area woman recalls time with cult

She joined Applewhite on '70s recruiting trips

L. Erik Bratt STAFF WRITER

 ALLBROOK — They lived a nomadic life-style, traveling the country, sleeping in tents and recruiting others who aspired to a higher level of existence.

They were paired up in twos and spent much

of their time aligning themselves with god's will and preparing their bodies for the transformation to a whole new dimension.

They were the early followers of Marshall Applewhite and Bonnie Nettles, otherwise known as "Bo and Peep" or "The Two," the founders of a UFO cult that promised life after death in outer space.

Fallbrook resident Leslie Light, 48, was one of the original followers of Applewhite's group, long before it lived in luxurious, rented mansions, before it even had a name.

It later became known as Heaven's Gate, the group whose members committed mass suicide at a Rancho Santa Fe mansion. The bodies of 39, aged 26 to 72, were discovered on Wednesday. Applewhite was among the dead. Nettles died of natural causes in 1985.

Light joined the group for three months in 1975, after seeing a recruiting flier at a Northern California community college.

A self-described former hippie, Light went to a recruiting meeting and was immediately hooked by the message of attaining a higher level. But first you had to renounce all earthly desires and attachments, which were seen as impediments to evolving beyond the human form.

"I went home and said goodbye to my mother and family," Light said during an interview yesterday. "They thought I was nuts."

Light packed a few belongings, jumped in her car and headed for a rendezvous point in Eureka. Her mother, Mary Jean Henrich, feared the

worst for her daughter.
"I was hysterical," Henrich said. "We thought,

'Where are the bodies going to show up.' Light assumed a new name in the group, first

EDUARDO CONTRERAS/Union-Tribune

Thea and then Crystral, and was paired with another member. After complaining about her first partner, who scared her, she was paired with another man.

For the next three months, the group traveled around the country, from Oregon to Illinois, trying to recruit new members. They stayed at remote campsites in the wilderness.

When it was time to move on, each couple was given a small amount of money and a specific location to meet in a day or two.

The message delivered by Applewhite and his followers during recruitment was one of expediency, Light said.

Applewhite said there was a brief opportunity to leave this Earth behind by transforming their bodies to a new physical level and ascending to something called "The Fifth Kingdom." They would be assisted in their journey by spaceships, Applewhite told his followers.

The group's message hit home with many people, some of whom left their family and friends to join. From more than two dozen people when Light joined, the group swelled to as many as 150 to 200 people when it broke up three months later, she said.

She attributed the group's recruiting success

Strong memories: Fallbrook resident Leslie Light was a member of Marshall Applewhite's cult in 1975 before the group even took the name Heaven's

Gate. She joined after seeing a recruiting flier. The group splintered three months later, and Light hadn't heard anything of Applewhite until last week's suicides.

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to the charismatic Applewhite, who was wellspoken and direct.
"He had this alien, Dr. Spock energy that

came from his eyes," said Light, a licensed psychotherapist who works at an adult crisis center in Oceanside. "He had this uncanny ability to just state his beliefs. There was no ego or power trip:"

There was also no coercion or talk of suicide, although "The Two" often said they would be physically killed and resurrected three and a half days later to take their followers with them into

Light said she stayed with the group until the fall of 1975 when Applewhite, fearing the FBI had infiltrated their ranks, suddenly vanished.

Leaderless, the group stayed together for awhile, but soon splintered. Many of them traveled to Oakland, where "The Two" said they would be soon resurrected. But that didn't happen, Light said.

Light didn't connect last week's mass suicide with Applewhite until she received a call from her mother, who now lives in Oceanside. She turned on the television and saw a familiar face.

'I looked at the news and there was Bo, looking a lot thinner and a lot older," Light said.

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APR 03 1997

FBI-SAN DIEGO

Additional profiles of the cult members

The final four names were released yesterday:

Alphonzo Richard Foster, 44, Minnesota

Lindley Ayerhard Pease, female, 41, New Hampshire

Lucy Eva Pesho, 63, Albuquerque, N.M.

Gordon Thomas Welch, 50, Arizona

More pictures and biographical information about the participants the cult suicide in Rancho Santa Fe emerge daily. Here are the latest:



Robert John Arancio 46, Dallas, Texas



Michael Howard Carrier 48, Richardson, Texas



Norma Jeane Nelson
59, Dallas, Texas
Nelson told a former
neighbor at a North Dallas
apartment complex that she
was from Star Trek. "We just
looked at her in surprise. ... It
just didn't dawn on us that
she was in a type of cult,"
Cynthia McGowan said. "We
thought that maybe she was
crazy."



Michael Barr Sandoe 26, Boulder, Colo.

Sandoe had been in the Army, where he became a paratrooper and a Ranger, said his mother, JoAnne Sandoe of Abingdon, Va. "He was in Desert Storm. He was in the infantry — out of Fort Benning, Ga.," she said. After that, he "worked and trav-

eled." JoAnne Sandoe said she had no indication her son might be involved with the Heaven's Gate group. Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A-13 San Diego Union-Tribune San Diego, CA

Date: Edition:

Tuesday, 4/1/97

Title:

"Additional profiles of the cult members"

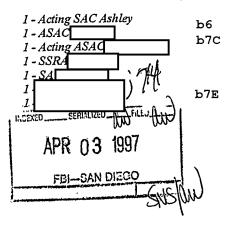
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San Diego Indexing:







Betty Eldrie Deal 64, Dallas, Texas

Deal rented a mailbox at a self-storage business in Albuquerque, N.M., in March 1995, according to her mail application form. The address she gave turned out to be a vacant lot.

She showed up from time to time to pick up mail, often with a group that included another woman and two men. They all dressed alike — black nylon pants and white shirts. When it was cold, they wore black windbreakers.

They always paid the mailbox rent in cash.

They rented three rooms in a hardware store to use as offices. The rooms were full of computers.

Larry Gustin, the owner of the hardware store in Mountainair, a small town outside Albuquerque, said they paid rent through October 1995.

"They never talked about any religion or cult, nothing like that," Gustin said. "they were just friendly and talked small talk."

He said they told him "they had been called to California."

"They said they really didn't want to go," he said.



Jeffrey Howard Lewis

41, San Antonio, Texas Lewis was a former massage therapist from San Antonio. Four years ago, Lewis sold his possessions and left San Antonio to join Heaven's Gate, according to a friend, David Tayloe. "He told us that he wouldn't be communicating with any of his friends and to be happy for him, because this is what he felt was right for him," Tayloe said. Lewis, who worked as a masseur out of his house, said he was joining a cult for the second



Denise June Thurman

44, Austin, Texas
Thurman grew up with two
older brothers in a colonialstyle house in Locust Valley,
on Long Island, N.Y.

Thurman attended the Christian Science Church. She rode a yellow bus to Locust Valley High School, where she was a cheerleader.

She carried a B average, but friends said she lost interest in school in her senior year. She began experimenting with drugs and grew interested in Eastern philosophies.

The 1969-1970 issue of The Trident, the Locust Valley High School yearbook, depicts a smiling group of cheerleaders, Thurman among them.

"I always thought she had everything," said Shirley Whitman, an acquaintance who recalled watching Thurman and the other cheerleaders practice. "I was always a little envious and wanted to be just like her."

Bill Bleyer, a reporter for Newsday, was a close friend of Thurman's in high school. He wrote that she graduated from Boston University in the mid-1970s, then decided to hitchhike to the West Coast.

Bleyer said he dropped her off at the entrance to the New Jersey Turnpike and never heard from her again.

He said he had since learned that when she visited her family briefly 10 years ago she was thin, her long hair had been cut short, and she appeared docile and childlike.

"The Denise I knew died 20-something years ago when she basically severed all ties and disappeared," Bleyer said.

News service reports and the work of staff writers, including Clark Brooks, contributed to this report.

Two nurses in cult were last to die

Mass suicide began as early as March 23

By Cheryl Clark and Kelly Thornton STAFF WRITERS

The last two Heaven's Gate members to die were nurses who suffocated after taking powerful amounts of a narcotic painkiller and placing plastic bags over their heads, the county medical examiner said yesterday.

Susan Francis Strom, 44, of Texas and Julie Elmira LaMontagne, 45, of New Mexico probably had helped many fellow cult members die earlier by assisting with the placement of plastic bags over their heads after they consumed phenobarbital and alcohol, said Dr. Brian Blackbourne, county medical examiner.

Investigators have determined that the mass suicide began as early . as March 23, with the deaths happening in three separate clusters. A

See.SUICIDE on Page A-12



CULT SUICIDE IN RANCHO SANTA FE

Inside

- New era: Experts say apocalyptic beliefs are likely to become increasingly visible. A-12
- Property value:
 Deal may be in the
 works to purchase
 infamous mansion to
 "bring some closure
 to the situation." A-12
- Neighborhoods: Residents say they had no idea a cult was in their midst. But this lack of neighborliness and awareness is not unusual. E-1

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A-1 San Diego Union-Tribune San Diego, CA

Date: Edition:

Tuesday, 4/1/97

Title:

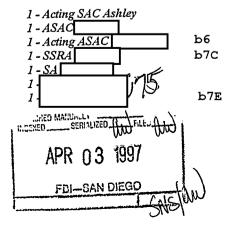
"Two nurses in cult were last to die"

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Suicide

Two nurses in cult were last to die

Continued from A-1

former cult member discovered the 39 bodies Wednesday in a rented . Rancho Santa Fe mansion.

Decomposition indicates that cult leader Marshall Herff Applewhite's death probably took place "toward the end of the second" phase, the medical examiner reported.

Blackbourne said Strom and La-Montagne had "pretty high levels of Vicodin" in their blood, "probably just a guarantee to make sure they died, since they were the last and no one else was there to help them."

A third woman, Judith Ann Rowland, 50, of Texas, is believed to have died about the same time. She also had a plastic bag over her head but was covered by a purple shroud, as were all the dead except the two

"We believe that she died toward the very end, but still the two others were alive and able to cover her up," Blackbourne said.

Toxic levels of phenobarbital, an anti-anxiety medication and sedative, were found in tests that have been completed on 10 of the other bodies.

Officials said they did not know where the Heaven's Gate cult obtained such large quantities of the medications, which are not available in the United States without a prescription.

: However, Vicodin and phenobarbital can be purchased over the counter in Tijuana, said John Rodriguez, supervising forensic investigator for the Medical Examiner's Office.

: At a broadcast news conference yesterday, law enforcement and medical examiner officials said they were still seeking relatives of Alphonzo Richard Foster, 44, of Minnesota and Lindley Averhart Pease. 41, whose home state was not known.

Juanita Foster of El Caion heard the broadcast and called the county morgue to claim her brother. She declined comment last night.

.. The names of two other deceased members of the cult also were released yesterday. They are Lucy Eva Pesho, 63, of New Mexico and Gordon Thomas Welch, 50, of Arizona.

Among other details disclosed:

sies have determined - rather than six - of the 18 men in the cult had been castrated. The removal of their testicles, a rare procedure called orchiectomy, would make it impossible to have an erection and would reduce sexual drive.

| Blackbourne said the operation was "not something that a legitimate physician would normally do on request" in the absence of a serious medical condition such as testicular cancer. But he added that the procedure appeared to have heen professionally performed some time ago.

■ Investigators said Richard Ford, 43, the former cult member also known as Rio D'Angelo who discovered and reported the bodies. had backed out of the group four to six weeks ago. "He decided he

didn't want any part of this event and wasn't ready to go to the next level at this time," said sheriff's homicide Lt. Gerald Lipscomb. -Ford has voluntarily turned over boxes of tapes and letters and other documents.

■ Blood testing is to begin this · week for evidence of infection with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, because some relatives of the deceased requested it, Blackbourne

said.

 As of midafternoon yesterday, 11 bodies had been released to mortuaries. County officials said that if family members do not claim the bodies and make their own arrangements the remains will be cremated at public expense.

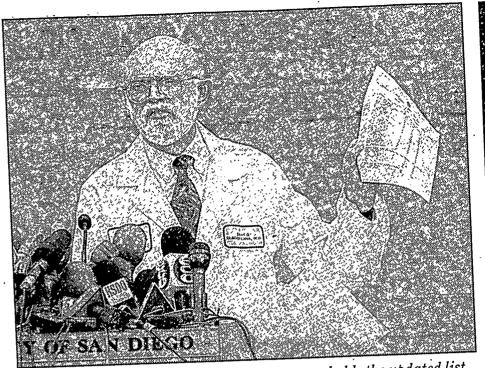
Blackbourne re-emphasized that his office has not yet ruled whether the deaths were caused by asphyxiation from smothering with a plastic bag or by respiratory arrest from a drug overdose. That is to be determined by the final toxicological reports, which may be complete by Friday.

Blackbourne said none of the deceased, including Applewhite, appeared to have cancer - despite rumors to that effect - although Applewhite, 65, showed signs of coronary artery disease typical for

a man his age.

One avenue left for authorities to explore is the array of electronic files stored in the cult's computers. Lipscomb said he is seeking help from FBI computer experts to uncover the data in 11 to 14 computers and numerous computer discs. "We don't want to enter a computer and possibly damage anything," he said.

Sheriff's investigators said they had no evidence of any crimes associated with the cult that they need to investigate and no indication that anyone else was involved in the .-deaths. "It's a felony to assist in a



County Medical Examiner Brian Blackbourne holds the updated list of names of cult members who died in last week's suicide. Officials said they were still looking for the relatives of two of the deceased.

socks, slippers and toiletry items," suicide, but who would we charge?" Lipscomb said.

But Lipscomb said detectives will try to determine where the cult members obtained the phenobarbital, which the group apparently mixed into containers of pudding or applesauce and then chased with alcohol, probably vodka. He said that, if it is determined that the drugs were obtained illegally, "We'll turn it over to drug enforcement. That's a stretch, though."

Investigators have searched the belongings, suitcases, knapsacks and gym bags left at the foot of each member's death bed and found personal clothing, every item wrapped in plastic. "Included were Nike warm-up suits, slacks, underwear, _mit mass suicide. Sheriff's detec- _along the way.

said Calvin Vine, deputy medical examiner. A 9mm handgun was found in one of the bags.

Authorities said they believe the cultists got their recipe of death from "Final Exit," a how-to suicide manual from the pro-euthanasia Hemlock Society. Handwritten instructions found in the mansion appeared to be taken verbatim from the controversial book, including using a plastic bag over the head to speed the body's absorption of the drugs, Lipscomb said.

Detectives are sorting through 50 to 70 tips, including many bogus reports, saying that other cults plan to mimic Heaven's Gate and comSheriff's investigators said they had no evidence to indicate that anyone else was involved in the deaths. "It's a felony to assist in a suicide, but who would we charge?" said Lt. Gerald Lipscomb.

tives passed along some information to the FBI's cult investigators, but no other group with any connection to Heaven's Gate has yet been found.

Lipscomb said no effort would be made to delve into the group's financial records. Detectives will check its phone records, however, and they have interviewed four or _ five people who said they are former cult members.

In those interviews, they learned. that the cult members would have packed the suitcases found next to their bodies in preparation for space travel. Lipscomb said they were told that the cultists carried \$5 bills and quarters to prove they were not violating "vagrancy laws"



A relative of a cult member waits outside the county Medical Examiner's Office to be let in to identify the body.

. MOUNT CLIPPING IN SPACE BELOW

MILLENNIAL VIOLENCE FRAREI

By Jeff Ristine, STAFF WRITER

he Heaven's Gate cult thought it saw the end of the world, an Earth it warned was about to be "recycled, refurbished, started over."

The 39 members timed their escape to the approach of the Hale-Bopp comet and not the calendar.

But authorities on apocalyptic beliefs say the mass suicide in Rancho Santa Fe was an example of how a sense of apprehension linked to the new millennium can turn violent. And other examples of paranoid or destructive behavior, they say, are likely to become increasingly visible, not only as 2000 draws nearer, but for decades after.

"There are going to be more of these groups, and more groups are going to come out of the closet," said Richard Landes, a history professor at Boston University and co-founder of the Center for Millennial Stud-

Chip Berlet, senior analyst with a Cambridge, Mass., think tank, Political Research Associates, said: "What we're experiencing now is the ramp-up to the millennium."

The notion of the new millennium as a time of global chaos is hardly limited to small cults like Heaven's Gate.

Grounded in prophecies of rebirth carried in the New Testament's Book of Revelation, it is a viewpoint visible to some millennial researchers in social movements that include anti-government militias, New Age enthusiasts, UFOlogists and the religious right.

In this company, the mass suicide in Rancho Santa Fe is seen as only one form of violence associated with the apocalyptic millennialism and not even the deadli-

Berlet noted the apocalyptic overtones in the 1993 raid against the Branch Davidian compound in Waco,

Texas, when cult leader David Koresh expounded on the Seven Seals, a portent of Judgment Day in the Book of Revelation. Eighty-five people died when the compound went up in flames.

Battle against evil

Apocalyptic notions of a battle against evil — represented, to some, by the governments of the world—also can be seen in the attitudes of the Randall Weaver family in Ruby Ridge, Idaho, where a bungled federal assault resulted in three deaths in 1992; and in Montana's Freemen, targets of a more peaceful confrontation last year, Berlet said.

"I expect more militia violence," Landes said.
"There is the sort of pre-apocalyptic violence of the
groups that think God has given them a warrant to
purge the Earth of its impurities, and these are the
people who blow up gay bars and abortion clinics," he
said.

Another sort, what Landes calls the "post-apocalyptic" groups, "can get kind of nasty . . . when God doesn't appear."

"They look for scapegoats," he said.

Heaven's Gate turned its violence inward. The cult members' plan to leave their mortal bodies and ascend to a "kingdom level above human" is strikingly similar to the biblical notion of the Rapture, accepted by many born-again Christians as a millennial event in which Christians still living on Earth will rise through the clouds to meet the Lord.

Less benign visions

Other apocalyptic visions are not so benign.
Hamas, the Islamic extremist group that has carried out a series of suicide assaults in Israel, shows the lengths to which some can go when convinced that

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A-12 San Diego Union-Tribune San Diego, CA

Date: Edition:

Tuesday, 4/1/97

Title:

"Millennial Violence Feared"

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they are caught up in a battle between good and evil. "There's no question that Hamas is deeply apocalyptic," Landes said.

And while some speak of 2000 as a time of great change, many of today's apocalyptic forecasters are pegging their predictions to later dates.

2007 reportedly has been bench-marked by Hal Lindsay, author of the best seller "The Late, Great Planet Earth." Some New Agers, attempting to interpret an ancient Mayan calendar, regard 2012 as a conclusion.

Still others point to 2033, 2000 years from Jesus Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, as the turning point.

"A five-to-10-year ramp-up period and a five-to-10-year ramp-down period" surround millennial bench marks, said Berlet, whose group pays close attention to activities of right-wing movements.

During such times, true believers interpret a variety of symbols as confirmation of impending change.

"Simple, natural events, whether it's a comet or a meteorite shower or a volcano, a flood, an earthquake, will take on great symbolic meaning to people who are looking for the signs of the times," Berlet said. "The signs that we're in the end."

Can last decades

And Landes, an expert on civilization around the year 1000, said his research shows the mixture of disquiet and exhilaration over millennial change can last decades.

"We literally have a 30- or 40-year period in which people are reading the signs of the end in almost anything that occurs," he said.

One theme prominent in today's millennialism is UFOs. Years before Heaven's Gate members pinned

their hopes on the unseen spacecraft they thought was trailing Hale-Bopp, the El Cajon-based organization Unarius predicted a New Age launched by a visit from an interstellar starship.

The group, which previously specified a number of landing dates that failed to come about, says in its latest literature that a vehicle carrying 1,000 space aliens will land by 2001 in the onset to massive, positive global change.

When handled by particularly adept leaders, darker predictions can have profound and lasting effects.

Around 1825, a religious leader named William Miller predicted the end of the world in 1843.

"In the three years before (1843) the movement took off like a rocket," Landes said. "You had hundreds of thousands of people who weren't planting crops because they didn't expect to be around to harvest them."

Miller's movement later evolved into the Seventh-Day Adventists.

History suggests that it can become increasingly difficult for society to grapple with doomsday beliefs.

"In moments where the apocalyptic tensions are rising, (the) sort of calm voice of reason that says, 'No, it's not the end of the world, calm down, don't worry,' is in fact not very powerful," Landes added. "The normal voices of reason lose their grip."

Berlet said reason is at least worth a try.

"The real (challenge) here is how to turn this moment of millennial expectations so that people look toward positive outcomes, toward renewal," he said.

"You don't want people to lock their doors and be afraid for the millennium. It's too wonderful a moment. But we don't want that it be taken over by people who will turn it toward chaos and toward bloody outcomes."

Cult Left No Survivors, Police Say

■ Suicide: Investigators believe the 39 Heaven's Gate members who died constituted the entire group. Officials release identities of two previously unnamed victims.

By TONY PERRY TIMES STAFF WRITER

SAN DIEGO—Investigators probing the mass suicide in Rancho Santa Fe are convinced that the 39 dead constituted the entire Heaven's Gate cult and that the organization had no splinter groups or links to other cults, authorities said Monday.

San Diego County Sheriff's Department homicide investigator Lt. Gerald Lipscomb said that the only other active member of the cult, identified as Richard Ford, 43, left four to six weeks ago because he disagreed with plans to commit mass suicide in preparation for ascending to a higher plane.

"He wasn't ready to go to the next level at this time," Lipscomb told a news conference.

Ford is apparently the person who has previously been identified as Rio and who traveled to the Rancho Santa Fe mansion on Wednesday with his boss and was the first one to discover the bodies.

Medical Examiner Dr. Brian Blackbourne told reporters that eight of the 18 male suicide victims—including cult leader Marshall Applewhite—had been castrated. He said that in all eight cases the castrations were not new and appeared to have been done expertly.

"This is not something they did themselves," Blackbourne said. "This is not something done recently."

Blackbourne also released the names of the two victims whose families had not been located. Alphonzo Foster, 44, and Lindley Ayerhart Pease, 41, born in New Hampshire and known to have a sister, Sylvia Pease, who once lived in Palm Springs. A few hours after the news conference, Foster's family was located, according to the medical examiner's office.

Blackbourne also reiterated what he told reporters Sunday: Visual inspection of Applewhite's internal organs during an autopsy found no indication that he had cancer or any other terminal disease. Reports have circulated that Applewhite told his followers he was dying and that this disturbing news convinced them to commit suicide rather than live without their beloved leader.

But Lipscomb said that interviews with four former cult members and an initial review of documents, computer tapes and a Please see CULT, A16

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A3 Los Angeles Times Los Angeles, CA

Date: Edition:

Tuesday, 4/1/97

Title:

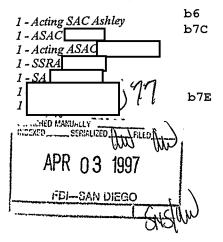
"Cult Left No Survivors, Police Say"

Character: or Classification:

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San Diego Indexing:





CULT: Heaven's Gate Left No Splinter Groups, Investigators Say

Continued from A3

"farewell" video left at the mansion in Rancho Santa Fe have uncovered no evidence to confirm the cancer story.

"The documents we have state nothing about him having cancer," Lipscomb said. A full review of the voluminous information left by the cult will take at least a month.

Lipscomb said that investigators, along with FBI experts, will check the computer diskettes to find out,

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among other things, where the cult got enough phenobarbital to kill 39 people. But he held out little hope of finding the source, noting that controlled drugs of all descriptions are readily available in nearby Tijuana.

He added that the Sheriff's Department has received tips about other cults, including one in southwestern Arizona, allegedly planning to ascend to the heavens in the same spaceship that the Heaven's Gate cultists were await-

ing. None of those tips has proved credible, he said.

A third of the bodies have been released to mortuaries. Any bodies left unclaimed for more than 30 days will be cremated, Blackbourne said.

The Heaven's Gate philosophy held that sexual organs were unneeded in the next world and could actually be a hindrance to gaining admission to that world. Just who performed the castrations is unknown.

"It's not something a legitimate physician would do on an individual person upon request," Blackbourne said. Questioned by reporters, he noted that none of the cultists was a doctor but that two of the women were nurses.

Autopsies have concluded that the cultists committed suicide by ingesting phenobarbital and vodka. The two cultists thought to be the last to die had also injected the narcotic painkiller Vicodin, Blackbourne said.

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REFERENCED PHOENIX, TEL CALL REQUESTED A LIST OF THE DECEDENTS IN CAPTIONED MASS SUICIDE.

THE FOLLOWING COMPRISES THE IDENTITIES OF THE SUICIDE VICTIMS IN RANCHO SANTA FE, INCLUDING SEX (F OR M), DATE OF BIRTH, SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER, AND STATE ISSUING THE INDIVIDUAL'S DRIVERS LICENSE:

DANA TRACEY ABREO, F, 04/22/62, 557-47-2327, COLORADO;

MARSHALL HERF APPLEWHITE, AKA, JONATHON ELDER, M, 05/17/31,

SSN UNKNOWN, DRIVERS LICENSE STATE UNKNOWN; ROBERT JOHN

ARANCIO, M, 05/30/51, 262-96-1081, TEXAS; RAYMOND ALAN BOWERS,

M, 12/02/51, 040-48-1266, FLORIDA; LADONNA ANN BRUGATO, F,

03/13/57, 544-62-1386, COLORADO; MARGARET JUNE BULL, F,

12/13/43, 536-44-5437, NEW MEXICO; CHERYL ELAINE BUTCHER, F,

07/15/54, 496-58-8357, TEXAS; MICHAEL HOWARD CARRIER, M,

03/23/49, 572-76-0443, TEXAS; SUZANNE SYLVIA COOKE, F,

12/22/42, 522-52-9782, MINNESOTA; BETTY ELDRIE DEAL, F,

06/18/33, 536-28-5019, TEXAS;

ERICA ERNST, F, 10/12/56, 609-54-0796, CALIFORNIA;

ALPHONZO RICHARD FOSTER, M, 11/03/52, 481-68-0632, MINNESOTA;

LAWRENCE JACKSON GALE, M, 01/07/50, 524-70-1532, CALIFORNIA;

^PAGE 3 SD UNCLAS

DARWIN LEE JOHNSON, M, 12/11/54, 561-98-7339, UTAH; JUDITH ANN LAHSON, AKA JUDITH ANN ROWLAND, F, 10/01/46, 573-74-8695, TEXAS; LOGAN M. LAHSON, AKA JOHN M. CRAIG, M, 05/04/34, 525-66-8957, NEW MEXICO; JULIE ELMIRA LAMONTAGNE, F, 11/26/51, 026-40-0824, NEW MEXICO; JAQUELINE OPAL LEONARD, F, 04/17/25, 478-26-2985, COLORADO; JEFFERY HOWARD LEWIS; M, 06/02/56, 457-08-2737, TEXAS;

GAIL RENEE MAEDER, F, 08/18/69, 120-68-0007, UTAH; STEVEN TERRY MCCARTER, M, 06/24/56, 410-04-0627, NEW MEXICO; JOEL PETER MCCORMICK, M, 04/23/68, 388-76-1664, UTAH; YVONNE MCCURDY-HILL, F, 06/17/58, 296-64-1211, OHIO; DAVID GEOFFERY MOORE, M, 08/14/56, 558-94-8508, CALIFORNIA; NANCY DIANE NELSON, F, 08/20/52, 504-66-5380, ARIZONA; NORMA JEANE NELSON, F, 01/31/38, 513-32-3193, TEXAS; THOMAS ALVA NICHOLS, M, 04/15/38, 334-30-0426, ARIZONA; SUSAN ELIZABETH NORA PAUP, F, 07/06/43, 549-62-6561, NEW MEXICO; LINDLEY AYERHART PEASE, M, 10/02/55, 002-38-1470, STATE UNKNOWN;

LUCY EVA PESHO, F, 08/24/33, 521-38-6123, NEW MEXICO;

MARGARET ELLA RICHTER, F, 01/10/51, 565-90-1084, CALIFORNIA;

MICHAEL BARR SANDOE, M, 07/03/71, 224-35-0705, COLORADO; BRIAN

b7E

^PAGE 4 SD UNCLAS b7E ALAN SCHAAF, M, 05/23/57, 545-80-2395, NEW MEXICO; JOYCE ANGELA SKALLA, F, 03/29/39, 503-40-1324, NEW MEXICO; GARY JORDAN ST. LOUIS, M, 07/02/53, 567-76-6597, NEW MEXICO; SUSAN FRANCES STROM, F, 02/19/53, 508-66-5783, TEXAS; DENISE JUNE THURMAN, F, 12/26/52, 089-46-3543, TEXAS; DAVID CABOT VAN SINDEREN, M, 11/10/48, 119-36-3927, CALIFORNIA; AND GORDON THOMAS WELCH, M, 02/23/47, 089-40-1178, ARIZONA. b6 ON APRIL 1, 1997, SAN b7C DIEGO COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE, ADVISED THAT ALL DECEDENTS FAMILIES HAVE NOW BEEN ADVISED. FOR INFORMATION OF PHOENIX, ON MARCH 28, 1997, OCEANSIDE PHOTO AND TELESCOPE, 1024 MISSION AVENUE, OCEANSIDE, CALIFORNIA, TELEPHONE (760)722-3348, b6 ADVISED THAT TWO MEMBERS OF THE HEAVEN'S GATE CULT, IDENTIFIED b7C ONLY AS BROTHER LOGAN AND BROTHER HAL, PURCHASED A \$3,000 COMPUTERIZED TELESCOPE FROM STORE ON JANUARY 30, 1997. ONE OF THE PURCHASERS TOLD THE SALES CLERK HE INTENDED TO USE THE TELESCOPE TO TRACK ALIENS FOLLOWING THE HALE-BOPP TWO WEEKS LATER, THESE INDIVIDUALS RETURNED THE TELESCOPE, DISAPPOINTED BY ITS POOR PERFORMANCE. ON THE BILL

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OF SALE FOR THE TELESCOPE THEY LISTED THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:	
TELAH SERVICES, 4757 EAST GREENWAY ROAD, SUITE 103-178,	
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85032. ALSO ON THE BILL OF SALE WAS THE AREA	
CODE 602 AND PHONE NUMBERS 351-3045 AND 616-8695.	
IN ADDITION, THE PASSPORT APPLICATION OF SUICIDE VICTIM	
LINDLEY PEASE, DATED NOVEMBER 4, 1996, BEARS THE FOLLOWING	
INFORMATION: ADDRESS - 4757 EAST GREENWAY ROAD, SUITE 103-236	
OR 105-236 (ILLEGIBLE), PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85032; PERMANENT	
ADDRESS - 16801 NORTH 49TH STREET, SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA, 85254;	
HOME AND BUSINESS PHONE - 602-351-3107.	
VICTIM ALPHONZO FOSTER'S LAST KNOWN ADDRESS WAS 4757 EAST	
GREENWAY ROAD, #103-78, PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85032-8510. VICTIM	
JULIE LAMONTAIGNE'S LAST KNOWN ADDRESS AS OF FEBRUARY, 1997,	
WAS 13802 NORTH SCOTTSDALE ROAD, SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA 85254-	
3458.	
SAN DIEGO DIVISION CONTACTS FOR CAPTIONED MATTER ARE SSRA	
NODELL COLLEGE	

RESIDENT AGENCY,

 \mathtt{BT}

b6 b7C

FBI

TRANSMIT VIA: X Teletype ☐ Facsimile ☐ AIRTEL	PRECEDENCE: Immediate Priority Routine	CLASSIFICATION: TOP SECRET SECRET CONFIDENTIAL UNCLAS E F T O UNCLAS	
		Date 4/1/97	
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FBI LOS ANGELES/PRIOR	ITY/		
FBI SAN FRANCISCO/PRI	ORITY/		
BT			ର
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CITE: //3780: SQ 4//			
PASS: NSD FOR UNIT C	HIEF	LD FOR SSA	b 6
AND SUPERVISO	RY COMPUTER SPEC	CIALIST (SCS)	b 7C
; LOS ANGELES	FOR SSA	SAN FRANCISCO FOR	
SSA .			
CALIFORNIA; MASS SUIC	IDE OF THIRTY NI	A NORTE, RANCHO SANTA FE, INE INDIVIDUALS, MARCH 26, RORISTS-VIOLENT CRIMES;	
		SEARCHED IIVI SERIALIZED() FIL	ED AW
Approved: GDA/SMS/A	Original filena	ame: <u>Ammolw</u> .091	·
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^PAGE 2 SD UNCLAS	b7E		
REFERENCE SAN DIEGO SSRA TEL CALL TO			
SCS COMPUTER ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE TEAM			
(CART), MARCH 31, 1997, AND SAN DIEGO SA	b 6		
TEL CALL TO SCS AND LOS ANGELES SA TEL	b70		
CALL TO SA APRIL 1, 1997.			
THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE (SDSO) HAS ASKED			
FOR FBI ASSISTANCE IN RETRIEVING INFORMATION FROM SEVERAL			
COMPUTERS SEIZED FROM THE RESIDENCE WHERE CAPTIONED MASS			
SUICIDE OCCURRED. IT IS ANTICIPATED THE DATA RETRIEVAL WILL			
TAKE ONE DAY.			
PER REFERENCED TEL CALLS, SAN DIEGO REQUESTS THE			
FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS TRAVEL TO SAN DIEGO TO BEGIN BACKUP			
PROCEDURES ON THE COMPUTER DATA, COMMENCING APRIL 3, 1997: CS			
CART UNIT, LABORATORY DIVISION; LOS ANGELES			
SA'S AND SAN	b6 b7C		
FRANCISCO SA			
PER REFERENCED TEL CALL OF SA HE WILL TRAVEL TO	b6		
SAN DIEGO FROM MURIETTA, CALIFORNIA ON THE AFTERNOON OF APRIL	ь7C		
2 ,1997.			

^PAGE 3 SD UNCLAS	b7E
ACTING SAC GRANT D. ASHLEY HAS AUTHORIZED PAYMENT FOR SA	
TRAVEL, AS WELL AS ONE NIGHT'S LODGING FOR SA	b 6
FROM SAN DIEGO'S BUDGET. THE LABORATORY DIVISION WILL HANDLE	b70
TRAVEL EXPENSES FOR CS	
SAN DIEGO POINTS OF CONTACT ARE SSRA	b 6
AND SA NORTH COUNTY RESIDENT AGENCY AT	ь7с
BT	

FBI

TRANSMIT VIA: X Teletype Facsimile AIRTEL	PRECEDENCE: Immediate Priority Routine	CLASSIFICATION: TOP SECRET SECRET CONFIDENTIAL UNCLAS E F T O UNCLAS	
		Date 3/31/97	
FM FBI SAN DIEĞO	(P)		1.75
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FBI SAN FRANCISCO			
FBI CHARLOTTE/PRI	•		
FBI WFO/PRIORITY	•		
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PASS: NSD FOR UN	NIT CHIEF	CID FOR VCMO AND SIOC;	
LABORATORY DIVIS	CON FOR SSA		b6
: CHARLOTT	TE FOR SA	SAN FRANCISCO FOR SSA	b7C
; WE	FO FOR SSA		
SUBJECT: HEAVENS	GATE, 18241 COLINA 1	NORTE, RANCHO SANTA FE,	
CALIFORNIA; MASS	SUICIDE OF THIRTY NI	NE INDIVIDUALS, MARCH 26,	
1997; ACTS OF TER	RRORISM-DOMESTIC TERRO	ORISTS-VIOLENT CRIMES;	
PRELIMINARY INQUI	IRY; OO: SAN DIEGO.		<i>(it</i> a
	200	SERIALIZED FIL	ED
Approved: MDA) Original filenan	ne: <u>Ammoolw.090</u>	•
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MRI/JULIAN DATE:	1139/000	ISN: 000	•
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^PAGE 2 SD UNCLAS	b7E
REFERENCE SAN DIEGO TELETYPES TO THE DIRECTOR DATED MARCH	
27 AND 28, 1997, CAPTIONED AS ABOVE SAN DIEGO SSRA	
TEL CALL TO CART UNIT, SSA	b 6
CART UNIT, AND SSA SAN FRANCISCO	ь70
DIVISION, MARCH 29, 1997, SSA WFO, MARCH 30, 1997,	
AND SA, CHARLOTTE DIVISION, RALEIGH RA, MARCH 31,	
1997.	
REFERENCED TELETYPES TO ALL FIELD DIVISIONS PROVIDED	
INFORMATION THAT SAN DIEGO HAD INITIATED A PRELIMINARY INQUIRY	
INTO CAPTIONED MATTER AND HAD OFFERED FBI ASSISTANCE TO THE	
SAN DIEGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE IN THE INVESTIGATION OF THIS	
MATTER.	
ON MARCH 29, 1997, DETECTIVE , HOMICIDE, SAN	b6 b7С
DIEGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, ADVISED THAT THE SAN DIEGO	
COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE COMMUNICATION CENTER HAD RECEIVED	
INFORMATION THAT INTERNET WEBSITE	
HTTP://WWW.PAGECREATOR.COM/HOME/2000/PAGE9.HTML CONTAINED THE	
MESSAGE, "UFO WARNING: WE WILL NOT RETURN TO OUR HUMAN	
CONTAINERS 3/22/97. NORTH CAROLINA CONNECTION TO JOIN	
BROTHERS IN SPACE: THE HYSTERIA FOLLOWING THE "DEATHS" OF THE	

^PAGE 3 SD UNCLAS

ANGELS IN CALIFORNIA WILL EVENTUALLY PASS. WE SHALL TOO.

IT'S NOW OUR TURN TO LEAVE THIS EARTH FOR THEIR KINGDOM.

03/31/1997. WHETHER HALE-BOPP HAS A "COMPANION" OR NOT IS

IRRELEVANT FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE, HOWEVER, ITS ARRIVAL IS

JOYOUSLY VERY SIGNIFICANT TO US AT "HEAVEN'S GATE." THE JOY

IS THAT OUR OLDER MEMBER IN THE EVOLUTIONARY LEVEL ABOVE HUMAN

(THE "KINGDOM OF HEAVEN") HAS MADE IT CLEAR TO US THAT HALE-BOPP'S APPROACH IS THE "MARKER" WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR - THE TIME FOR THE ARRIVAL OF THE SPACECRAFT FROM THE LEVEL ABOVE HUMAN TO TAKE US HOME TO "THEIR WORLD" -- IN THE LITERAL HEAVENS. OUR 22 YEARS OF CLASSROOM HERE ON PLANET EARTH IS FINALLY COMING TO CONCLUSION -- "GRADUATION" FROM THE HUMAN EVOLUTIONARY LEVEL. WE ARE HAPPILY PREPARED TO LEAVE "THIS WORLD" AND GO WITH TI'S CREW. IF YOU STUDY THE MATERIAL ON THIS WEBSITE YOU WILL HOPEFULLY UNDERSTAND OUR JOY AND WHAT OUR PURPOSE HERE ON EARTH HAS BEEN . YOU MAY EVEN FIND YOUR "BOARDING PASS" TO LEAVE WITH US DURING THIS BRIEF "WINDOW." WE ARE SO VERY THANKFUL THAT WE HAVE BEEN RECIPIENTS OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PREPARE FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THEIR KINGDOM, AND TO

^PAGE 4 SDUNCLAS	b7E		
EXPERIENCE THEIR BOUNDLESS CARING AND NURTURING." AT THE END			
OF THE MESSAGE WAS THE E-MAIL ADDRESS			
HTTP:\\WWW.FOUR11.COM.TOHEAVEN@ROCKETMAIL.COM.			
CONCERN THAT THIS MESSAGE MAY INVOLVE A SIMILAR GROUP OR			
FACTION OF HEAVEN'S GATE AND THAT ANOTHER MASS SUICIDE MAY			
TAKE PLACE ON MARCH 31, 1997, PROMPTED THE SAN DIEGO SHERIFF'S			
OFFICE TO SEEK FBI ASSISTANCE TO DETERMINE THE ORIGINATOR AND			
WHETHER OR NOT THE MESSAGE WAS A HOAX. SUBSEQUENT CONTACT			
WITH SSA , CART UNIT FBIHQ, SSA	b. C		
COMPUTER SQUAD SAN FRANCISCO AND SSA b7c			
COMPUTER SQUAD WFO, DETERMINED THAT THE SYSTEM'S ADMINISTRATOR			
FOR INTERNET SITE			
Is	b 6		
	b7C		
DURING THE EVENING OF MARCH 30, 1997,			
WAS CONTACTED BY AGENTS OF THE CHARLOTTE OFFICE, RALEIGH RA,			
WHO ADVISED THAT THE MESSAGE WAS A HOAX AND THAT THE PERSON			
RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MESSAGE WAS, AN ACQUAINTANCE.	b6		
ACCORDING TO SA RALEIGH RA, 03/31/1997,			
ADVISED THAT SHE HAD SEEN THE AFOREMENTIONED MESSAGE			

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PRE	VIOUSLY ON THE INTERN	FOR JET AND HAD ADMONISHED	
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MEN	BERS OF THE RALEIGH R	RA ARE CURRENTLY ATTEMPTING TO LOCATE	D/C
	TO INTERVIEW	HIM REGARDING THIS MESSAGE.	
	SAN DIEGO APPRECIAT	TES THE PROMPT, TENACIOUS, AND	
EXC	ELLENT WORK OF THE LA	ABORATORY DIVISION (CART UNIT), SAN	
FR <i>I</i>	NCISCO DIVISION, WFO	DIVISION AND CHARLOTTE DIVISION IN	
IDE	NTIFYING THE INTERNET	LOCATIONS, SERVERS AND WEBSITES AND	
INI	ERVIEWING THE PERSON	RESPONSIBLE FOR THE E-MAIL MESSAGE.	
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	OR SA	, NORTH COUNTY RESIDENT AGENCY	b6 b7С
AT			
BT			

Castration revealed in autopsies

D. WADE BOOTH
NORTH COUNTY TIMES

SAN DIEGO — As some relatives shed tears and others shrugged off the deaths of loved ones lost to an androgynous cult of immortalists, authorities disclosed Friday the shepherd and five of his flock were castrated years ago.

The gruesome detail was released by Medical Examiner Brian Blackbourne at a press conference outside his media-beseiged Kearny Mesa office. As night fell, officials said they had notified the relatives of 34 of 39 cultists found asphyxiated and drugged Wednesday in a posh Rancho Santa Fe mansion.

Many of the dead, from at least eight states and Washington, D.C., had followed 65-year-old Marshall H. Applewhite, also known as Father John Do, for several years in cross-country travels financed by their World Wide Web site-design business. Applewhite claimed to be an incarnated extraterrestrial.

Cult members told acquain-

➤ **DETAILS**, A6

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A-1 North County Times Escondido, CA

Date: Edition:

Saturday, 3/ 1/97

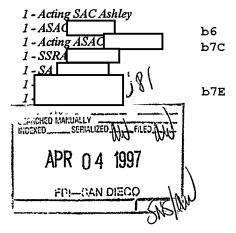
Title:

"Castration revealed in autopsies"

Character: or Classification:

Submitting Office





Continued from A1

tances that Applewhite preached a philosophy of celibacy and a genderless society to followers from his raised podium inside the mansion they had rented since October.

All of the group's members had short-cropped hair and wore similar gender-neutral clothing. The cultists opposed sex and reproduction, according to writings on their Web site. They used words like eunuch and virginity on the site.

Sheriff's deputies initially thought the victims were all men.

With the help of the FBI, sheriff's officials said they have begun to unravel the travels and past of the cult that called itself Heaven's Gate.

Other pieces of the puzzle

coming to light Friday:

■ Sheriff's officials told the North County Times they deciphered a world map, marked with places cult members intended to visit, inside the nine-bedroom house. Cult members decided to cut their travels short on the eve of Sunday's lunar eclipse and as the comet Hale-Bopp was making its closest pass by Earth.

In its writings, the group said that after waiting for 22 years to attain a higher level of existence, it would reach that place when members' souls met up with a spaceship flying in the tail of the

comet.

■ Among the dead was the brother of Nichelle Nichols, who played communications officer Lt. Uhura on the original "Star Trek" TV series.

- Sheriff's Lt. Jerry Lipscomb said detectives don't believe there are any surviving members of the cult, except for those who had renounced the group before the mass suicide. Blackbourne said group members had been dead for 36 to 72 hours or more before their discovery Wednesday.
- The Sheriff's Department solicited help from the FBI and the state Attorney General's Office to do background checks of the victims and to review computer hard drives taken from the home.
- Detectives went back to Beverly Hills to interview more witnesses, Lipscomb said, including 43-year-old Richard Ford for a second time. Ford found the bodies Wednesday after receiving two videotapes declaring the suicidal intentions Tuesday.

■ Out-of-this-world facts

flowed anew on computer the new postings on the World de Web after the Heaven's Gate Web site was shut down.

■ The last two cult members alive were middle-aged women. They had plastic bags still wrapped around their heads after helping the third and final group commit suicide.

■ Only three of the five who've undergone toxicology tests had lethal doses of phenobarbital in their systems. More

tests are under way.

Authorities spent most of the day trying to answer the "why" of one of this nation's largest mass suicides. And the answers seemed to flow through the World Wide Web, where cult leader Applewhite's extraterrestrial persona, known as "ET" on the Internet, seemed to answer the questions the world was searching for.

The cult followed his orders to

their deadly end.

Lipscomb told the North County Times that investigators had deciphered a world map found inside the mansion, and determined that the red dots on it were places they were to travel to spread their surreal philosophy.

"They opted to terminate their aspirations as a core group," he said. Destinations included London, Amsterdam, Saudi Arabia

and Sydney, Australia.

Applewhite was found alone in the large master bedroom while the others were found on beds throughout the nine-bedroom house. He was in the second or third of the three groups of cult members to die.

He taught his followers to shed earthly possessions, preached a strict doctrine of religious-type beliefs that meld modern-day religion with a belief that their bodies were host vessels for aliens, the group's Web site said.

The aliens arrived here between the 1940s and '90s in staged spacecraft crashes, the lit-

erature states.

"When I walked through (the house), I did not see the aliens," Blackbourne quipped at the press conference, drawing laughs.

He did note a picture of an alien-like creature on the mantel inside the home, saying, it was the "... head of an alien, like you see on 'The X-Files' TV show.

Days before their bodies were discovered Wednesday, the cult had sent two farewell videotapes and a letter to former cult member Ford. Ford's cult name was "Rio."

Lipscomb confirmed that Ford called authorities anonymously after coming to the home with his boss, Nick Matzorkis of the Bever-

ly Hills computer firm Interact.

Some of the victims had not contacted family members in decades, and Blackbourne said some families did not grieve.

A large majority of the victims had identifications linking them to New Mexico, although Blackbourne and sheriff's officials said there was nothing significant about that.

"They had driver's licenses from New Mexico, but they went to school perhaps in Minnesota, got married and had a marriage license in Ohio, got divorced in Colorado and ended up in California," sheriff's spokesman Ron Reina said.

Each cult member had plastic pocket protectors inside their shirt pocket. Some contained Chapstick, Kleenex, pens and pencils, a \$5 bill and quarters. In one case, a person had an ATM card, Blackbourne said after the news conference.

Refining earlier descriptions of the methodically planned suicide, Blackbourne read from a "little blue binder" found at the estate, describing a plan for death and mailing a note to ensure maximum delay in discovering the bodies. Lipscomb said the cult hopscotched the country in recent years and had plans to travel internationally. One of their Web sites had a German translation.

Lipscomb said the FBI and sheriff's intelligence unit detectives would be accessing phone records of the cult and getting into the hard drives of the computers found inside the home.

"There's some t's to cross and some i's to dot," Lipscomb said. "We need to get into those com-

puters."

Lipscomb also disclosed the detectives confiscated notebooks and journals from the home. "We took a piece of everything," he said after the press conference.

He added that there appeared to be many prescription drugs that toxicologists will be analyzing, but didn't know if any were phenobarbital — the drug ingested by at least some in the cult, according to preliminary tests done on five cultists.

"They were embracing death," Lipscomb said.

Lipscomb also said detectives will not focus on the financial dealings of the group, which paid its \$7,000 monthly rent in cash.

"I don't think it has a bearing on this," he said. "Their finances are not our concern at this point."

Staff writer **Timothy O'Hara** contributed to this story.

First deputies to respond recall gruesome discovery

TIMOTHY O'HARA NORTH COUNTY TIMES

SAN DIEGO — It was supposed to be a routine call to check on the welfare of those living in a Rancho Santa Fe mansion.

, It turned out to be much more.

When Deputy Robert Brunk arrived at 18241 Colina Norte at 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, he quickly realized things looked suspicious. But he had no idea he was about to walk into the aftermath of the deadliest mass suicide on U.S. soil.

Brunk, a six-year veteran, responded to a call to check on 39 people who supposedly had committed suicide. He was skeptical about the validity of the call.

➤ FIRST, A6

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A-1 North County Times Escondido, CA

Date: Edition:

Saturday, 3/ /97

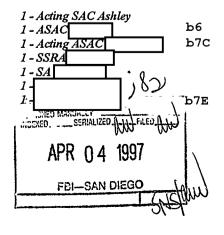
Title:

"First deputies to respond recall gruesome discovery"

Character: or Classification:

Submitting Office





Continued from A1

That would soon change, he told a throng of reporters at a press .conference Friday outside the Medical Examiner's Office in

Kearny Mesa.

He knocked on the door, checked around the outside of the nine-bedroom house, then entered through a side door. This is when he got a whiff of what he could describe only as "death."

"I have smelled that smell in the past and associated it with death," he said. "Once you have 'smelled it, it doesn't leave you."

Brunk left the home and '

called for backup.

· Deputy Laura Gacek, working an overtime shift on what was normally a day off, soon arrived. The two unholstered their guns and walked into the mansion.

h They passed through the firstfloor kitchen, dining room and several other rooms. Then they discovered about 10 bodies.

The deputies left the house to put on surgical masks and gloves. They re-entered to check for vital signs and count the bodies. They didn't know what to expect, they said.

"It doesn't appear that we have any survivors," Brunk told dispatchers in a somber tone. "Does anyone have the number for homicide?"

Because the victims' upper bodies were covered by purple shrouds, it was hard to tell their ages and genders. Authorities initially said they were all young

men aged 18 to 24.

They were actually 21 women and 18 men, the youngest 26 and the oldest 72. Members of a religious cult called Heaven's Gate, they died in three groups over the previous three days. They ingested a mixture of barbiturates and vodka, then asphyxiated themselves with plastic bags.

"We basically came forward to clear our consciences and tell people how it feels," Brunk said at the press conference. "We want to give our condolences to the families of the victims."

"It was very peaceful and calm, but surreal and disturbing. It was not traumatic," said Gacek, a four year-veteran who. like Brunk, works out of the Encinitas Sheriff's Station. "It is one of the most bizarre things I have ever experienced."

The smell from the bodies was so terrible that the two deputies went to a local hospital to be checked out, and the county Hazardous Materials Team was

called in to investigate.

While at the hospital, Sgt. Guy Chambers and Deputy Sheri Sorro acted as peer counselors for the two shaken deputies. They also spoke with the department's psychologist, Ira Grossman.

"We wanted to let them vent their feelings and tell them that what they were feeling was natural," Chambers said. "They wanted to know why someone

could do this."

Group members thought they were going to a higher evolutionary plane, according to videotapes they left behind. They said their souls would be carried there on a spaceship flying in the tail of the comet Hale-Bopp.

Chambers and Sorro also called the deputies' families and Brunk's girlfriend to reassure them they were all right.

"There were all kinds of rumors floating around the TV that they had inhaled some fumes and that they were at the hospital," Chambers said.

Sheriff's officials praised their

work and professionalism.

"They knew when (they) walked out of the gruesome scene (they) would have to go back in and check for vital signs and count all the bodies," Chambers said. "In the face of tragedy and adversity, they did their jobs. I have nothing but praise for them. They didn't crack under pressure."

Families bring home bodies of loved ones

KAREN S. SMITH NORTH COUNTY TIMES

SAN DIEGO — Under a gray Easter sky, the bodies of three Heaven's Gate cult members began the journey Sunday from the morgue to their grieving families in Florida, Minnesota

and New York.

The first of the 39 bodies to leave San Diego, the de-

■ More suicide stories. A2, B1.

partures came four days after the spaceship-chasing religious group's members were found dead in their \$1.6 million rented Rancho Santa Fe mansion. It was the largest mass suicide on U.S. soil.

➤ CULT, A2

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A-1 North County Times Escondido, CA

Date: Edition:

Monday, 3/31/97

Title:

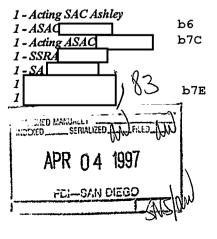
"Families bring home bodies of loved ones"

Character:

Classification:

Submitting Office





Continued from A1

CNN and Newsweek magazine reported Sunday members killed themselves because leader Marshall Herff Applewhite convinced them he was dying of cancer. Applewhite told followers his body was "disintegrating," Newsweek states in its April 7 issue.

The reports are based on computer disks the group sent to a former member who discovered the bodies. On one disk is a message from a cultist who says, "Once he is gone ... there is nothing left here on the face of the Earth for me ... no reason to stay a moment longer."

But with autopsies on all 39 cult members complete, Medical Examiner Brian Blackbourne said Applewhite did not suffer from cancer. Applewhite and five of his male followers had been castrated years earlier, apparently in adherence to the group's vow of celibacy.

On Saturday, three other families arrived at the Medical Examiner's Office to make funeral arrangements and claim bodies, bringing the total claimed to six.

The families of three still have not been found, the Medical Examiner's Office said. Authorities



DAVID CARLSON / NORTH COUNTY TIMES

Daniel Schaff, left, of ADA Mortuary in Lemon Grove, and employee Eddie Echeveria load a body into a mortuary van Sunday.

plan to release the names of those three cult members today, hoping their relatives will see or hear the media reports and step forward to claim the bodies.

Those taken from the morgue Sunday were loaded into two white vans from ADA Mortuary in Lemon Grove. Funeral home workers used a forklift to load two bodies from a refrigerated truck outside the facility into one van. The third body was brought from the medical examiner's main building.

As the vans pulled away, dozens of reporters and cameramen mobbed the drivers, clamoring to learn the destination of the three bodies.

The family of a fourth cult member, who live in South Dakota, also contacted the mortuary to have their loved one's body flown home, ADA Mortuary co-owner Barbara Schaff said.

Rancho Santa Fe appeared to be returning to normal as only a handful of news crews milled on the streets near the mansion at 18241 Colina Norte. The bodies were discovered there Wednesday by a former cult member, who the day before had received two videotapes and a letter declaring the group's suicidal intentions.

Group members died in three stages, most likely starting March 22 or 23, after swallowing a mixture of phenobarbital and vodka, then placing plastic bags over their heads, authorities said.

The timing coincides with the Hale-Bopp comet's closest approach to Earth. Members believed a spaceship was flying in the tail of the comet, according to the videos and Internet postings they left behind. They thought their souls would ride on the craft to a "higher level above human."

Sheriff's officials said they expect to wrap up their investigation by week's end, after they take a close look at the cult members' belongings and computer files found in the mansion.

Toxicology tests also should be finished by the end of the week. Tests on three of five members showed they had lethal doses of the barbiturate in their systems.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

Easter gives residents, nation chance to reflect on deaths

FROM STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

RANCHO SANTA FE - In Rancho Santa Fe and across the nation Sunday, Easter worshipers gathered to praise God as the

only keeper of heaven's gate.

"Jesus Christ is the gate, he's the only way. There's no UFO waiting behind a comet," Pastor Bob Botsford told a group of 300 at the Torrey Pines High School stadium. The school is just miles from the rented Rancho Santa Fe mansion where 39 Heaven's Gate cult members committed suicide last week, seeking redemption in a spaceship trailing the Hale-Bopp comet.

It was the largest mass suicide on U.S.

soil. Botsford's sermon was titled "The Key to

> REFLECT, A2



TOM UHLMAN / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Donald McCurdy listens Sunday at New Friendship Baptist Church in Cincinnati as the minister talks about cults and his sister, sit cide victim Yvonne McCurdy-Hill.

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

North County Times Escondido, CA

Date: Edition:

Monday, 3/31/97

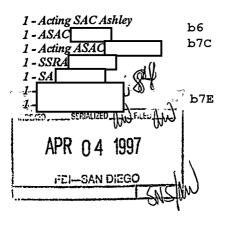
Title:

"Easter gives residents, nation chance to reflect on deaths"

Character: Classification:

Submitting Office





➤ REFLECT

Continued from A1

Heaven's Gate." In it, he warned the entrance was narrow, "only one person can pass through at a time. You can't get in because you belong to some group."

While Easter worshipers expressed sympathy for the families left behind, they were joyous in celebrating the Biblical story of Jesus Christ's resurrection.

"It's still very difficult to get (the suicides) out of your mind. I feel really sorry for the families," said Linda Wood, a 23-year Rancho Santa Fe resident.

She took some comfort in the celebration of Easter, however, expressing a sense of relief and renewed faith. "God created us. He didn't create us to take our lives," Wood said.

The Rev. Paul Nelson of the Village Community Presbyterian Church in Rancho Santa Fe mentioned the tragedy in his sermon, but didn't make it the focus.

Instead, he concentrated on the sacredness of life and what Christ had to offer. "People have been shocked. Many of us find ourselves with more questions than answers," he said.

Led by Marshall Herff Applewhite, cult members died en masse after ingesting a phenobarbital-laced pudding and vodka, then placing plastic bags over their heads. Their bodies were discovered Wednesday.

Applewhite had his own views of organized religions and good and evil. And in one of countless postings on the Internet, he proselytized that "Luciferians" — or evil space aliens — control Christianity.

"Only the Luciferians could have Christians believing that Jesus promoted family values, becoming better humans, establishing professional religious institutions, and looking for the Second Coming of some flowing-robed, peace-and-love manifestation of their artists' conceptions. Most religious think of a Kingdom of God, though it doesn't register to them that that Kingdom has many members.

They feel that if you acknowledge `many members' in the Kingdom of God, then you would be acknowledging a pantheism," he wrote.

That message was in marked contrast to those heard in churches nationwide Sunday.

In Washington, D.C, the Rev. J. Philip Wogaman told parishioners, including President Clinton, the mass suicide was a "sad, sad thing."

He spoke of what Easter is not. "It is not like a cult group tragically making a serious mistake, hoping to catch onto an extraterrestrial space craft."

Wogaman spoke of the young woman, a cult member, who on a videotape made shortly before her death said she felt she had no choice but to follow the others in suicide because "there is nothing here for me ... What a sad, sad thing."

Religious broadcaster Pat Robertson said in Virginia that Christians know they'll see Christ instead of a "funny looking" alien spaceship when they die.

For the ministers whose parishioners included relatives of the dead, the Easter sermons took on added significance.

'In Cincinnati, the Rev. H.L. Harvey did not refer specifically



Yvonne McCurdy-Hill

to Yvonne Mc-Curdy-Hill, the former postal worker and Heaven's Gate cult member. But the significance was clear to her friends and relatives in the congregation.

"We're just staying in prayer," said

Calvary Grove, a distant relative. "It really was shocking, really unexpected."

At a church breakfast after the 8 a.m. service, many were mystified by McCurdy-Hill's decision to leave her five children to join the cult, and by the role of the Internet in that decision.

After reading the cult's pages on the Internet using her home computer, McCurdy-Hill asked her mother last August to care for her three boys, ranging in age up to 19, and twin girls, born just two weeks earlier. She quit her job sorting magazines at the post office and left town, never to return.

McCurdy-Hill's husband, Steven Hill, also joined the cult last year but left before the mass suicide. He has not returned to his children, and his whereabouts are unclear.

Coroner releases names of dead cult members

CHRIS MORAN and KAREN S. SMITH NORTH COUNTY TIMES

SAN DIEGO — The release Friday of the names of 34 dead cult members whose families had been notified of their mass suicide signaled the imminent return of the bodies to hometowns nationwide.

The San Diego County Med-

ical Examiner's Office continued to try to reach the families of five cult members who poisoned or asphyxiated themselves in a Rancho Santa Fe mansion. The bodies were discovered Wednesday.

Friday's developments represent the shifting focus of the macabre, incomprehensible story of self-annihilation from

➤ NAMES, A6

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A-1 North County Times Escondido, CA

Date: Edition:

Saturday, 3/ /97

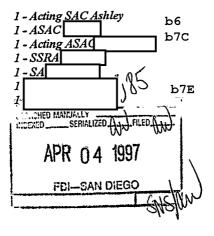
Title:

"Coroner releases names of dead cult members"

Character: or Classification:

Submitting Office







Continued from A1

its epicenter in the exclusive residential North County enclave to eight other states and the District of Columbia, where the bodies are expected to return.

The shock waves also carried hordes of media seeking to match the eerie end of the suicide participants with their familial beginning in search of answers to the baffling question: Why?

San Diego County Medical Examiner Brian Blackbourne produced a copy of a note recovered from the corpses' belongings at a news conference Friday outside the Kearny Mesa morgue.

It spelled out both the sequence of the deaths and the recipe for the poison.

"It says, 'The Routine,'" Blackbourne read.

The procedure had eight "assistants" helping the first 15 "classmates" to die.

Later the assistants helped another wave of 15 commit suicide. Then, seven of the assistants took their turn dying, attended by the final two members.

Julie LaMontague, 45, of Las Cruces, N.M., and Judith Ann Rowland, 50, of Dallas were the last to die and were found with plastic bags over their heads,

Blackbourne said.

One wore the bag completely over her head, the other had it pulled up to her forehead, he said

Blackbourne distributed a list of 34 names and their home states.

The conspicuous absence of family members coming to the Kearny Mesa office to identify and claim bodies had triggered speculation that they had no interest in claiming their often estranged relatives.

But authorities said they are now discouraging families from visiting the Medical Examiner's morgue.

"Most of the families are most

anxious to get the bodies so they can have some closure," said Calvin Vine, Medical Examiner's Office supervisor.

"One of the requests that seems to come over and over again is that they do not want their names released," said county spokesman Jack Merker during a morning briefing.

"Apparently they do not want to have any type of publicity in-

volved in this.'

As of Friday afternoon more than 1,500 people had used the toll-free hot line set up by the Medical Examiner's Office for inquiries about the identities of the dead, Blackbourne said.

Vine added that the medical

examiner's staff has been directing them to call their local funeral homes, which will coordinate with San Diego mortuaries the return of the bodies.

The mortuaries also will deliver the deceased's personal belongings to their relatives, Vine

Eleven families are already at work on funeral arrangements, and the first of the bodies will be shipped out Monday, medical examiners said.

A medical examiner's staff stretched to the limit has performed 21 autopsies.

Pathologists performed toxicology tests on the first five bodies,

three of which showed lethal doses of phenobarbital.

A lethal dose is 6 grams, or about 50 tablets, Blackbourne said.

The prescription drug is a depressant.

The final two to die had ingested phenobarbital, although not in lethal doses, Blackbourne said. The official cause of their deaths is pending further tests.

The remaining autopsies are expected to be completed by

Monday.

If any bodies go unclaimed, it's up to the county Public Administrator's Office to cremate or bury them in Mt. Hope Cemetery in San Diego.

Victims leave eerie farewell on video

Filmed message: 'The game's over'

RANDY DOTINGA NORTH COUNTY TIMES

RANCHO SANTA FE — Gazing into the video camera, the cult members grinned, gestured and chattered happily, saying their goodbyes without a hint of frowns or sadness.

They rambled on about how they loved their "classmates" and spoke incomprehensibly about leaving their "human bodies borrowed for this task." They predicted the media would "do a hatchet job" on them and talked about the world of "Star Trek."

And they prepared for death without using the word. "I think everyone in this class wanted something more than this human world had to offer," one woman said to the camera. "The game's over," another man said.

On a farewell videotape, the victims of the Rancho Santa Fe mass suicide talked about their commitment to each other and their hope for the future.

Another video showed the cult leader "Do" — an elderly man with unblinking, almost ghoulish eyes — who spoke about "body snatchers." The man went by the nickname Father John Do (from the musical note) and was later identified by authorities as Marshall Applewhite, the leader of the Heaven's Gate cult.

In another video, Applewhite stared into the camera in two separate segments. "In a sense, we're body snatchers because we came and incarnated into these human bodies and now we're leaving these human bodies behind," he said. "I hope you don't take that as a crude joke. I mean, it is a joke, but I did not mean to be offensive about it."

On the first videotape, 11 people made brief comments, most sitting on simple white patio chairs in front of a grove of trees. All had short hair and many wore unfachionable everlasses. The

women had slightly longer hair than the men, but their cuts were of the same male style.

Some appeared to be middleaged. One appeared to be no more than 20 and spoke admiringly of the cult leaders Ti (who apparently died years ago) and Do.

"I just want to say how thankful I am to Do and Ti. ... All my classmates have been so great to me and all the problems I've caused," he said with a laugh and a merry shrug. "It's my choice to do what I feel right and led to do and I plan on following my older member no matter where he goes or what it is. That is what I want to do and that's what I have to do and I'm very thankful for the design of that. And that's all."

A man next to him spoke about how the "media's going to do a hatchet job on us in the same way they do a hatchet job on practically every subject. If humans were told the truth about what's going on on this planet, they'd be shocked and wouldn't continue in their 8-to-5 slavery and ignorance."

Another cult member, a middle-aged man, raged against "spin doctors" and referred to science-fiction shows on television. "And the only thing I can say is, to us, this step of laying down ... these human bodies that we've borrowed for this task is just as simple, like we watch a lot of 'Star Trek,' a lot of 'Star Wars,' it's just, to us, it's just like going on a holodeck.

"We've been on a holodeck, we've been into training ... We figured out a day equals 1,000 years, played it out mathematically, it's roughly 30 minutes. We've been training on a holodeck for 30 minutes. Now it's time to stop. The game's over. It's time to put into practice what we've learned."

In the world of "Star Trek," a holodeck is a room aboard ship where programmable holograms create a world that appears to be Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A-2 North County Times Escondido, CA

Date: Edition:

Saturday, 3/31/97

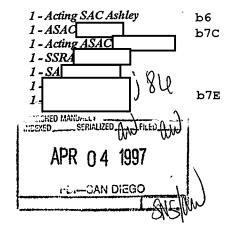
Title:

"Victims leave eerie farewell on video"

Character: or Classification:

Submitting Office





List of Heaven's Gate cult suicide victims

Thirty-nine people, 21 women and 18 men, found dead after a mass suicide in Rancho Santa Fe ranged in age from 26 to 72 years old with driver's licenses from nine states.

Relatives seeking information can contact the San Diego County Coroner's Office at (800) 600-0646.

Names of dead whose families have been notified:

Dana Tracey Abreo, 35, (female) Denver.

Marshall Herff Applewhite (aka Elder Jonathan), 66, no license.

Robert John Arancio, 46, Texas.

Raymond Alan Bowers, 45, Jupiter, Fla.

Ladonna Ann Brugato, 40, Englewood, Colo.

Margaret June Bull, 53, New Mexico.

Cheryl Elaine Butcher, 43, Texas.

Michael Howard Carrier, 48, Texas.

Suzanne Sylvia Cooke, 54, New Mexico.

John M. Craig (aka Logan Lahson), 63, New Mexico.

Betty Eldrie Deal, 64, Texas. Erika Ernst, 40, California.

Darwin Lee Johnson, 42, Orem, Utah

Gary Jordan, St. Louis, 44, New Mexico.

Julie LaMontague, 45, Las Cruces, N.M., born in Massachusetts, passport issued in Los Angeles.

Jacqueline Opal Leonard, 72, Littleton, Colo.

Jeffrey Howard Lewis, 41, Texas.

xas. Gail Renee Maeder, 28, Salt Lake City.

Steven McCarter, 41, Albuquerque, N.M.

Joel Peter McCormick, 29, Salt Lake City.

Yvonne McCurdy-Hill, 39, Cincinnati.

David Geoffery Moore, 41, of Los Gatos, Calif.

Norma Jeane Nelson, 59, Texas Nancy Dianne Nelson, 45, Arizona.

Thomas Alva Nichols, 59, Arizona.

Susan Elizabeth Nora Paup, 54, New Mexico.

Margaret Ella Richter, 46, Cali-

Judith Ann Rowland, 50, Dallas and Albuquerque, N.M., licenses.

Michael Sandoe, 25, Boulder, Colo.; born in Virginia, passport issued in Washington, D.C.

Brian Alan Schaaf, 40, New

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A-2 North County Times Escondido, CA

Date: Edition:

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"List of Heaven's Gate cult suicide victims"

Character:

Classification:

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San Diego Indexing:

Mexico.

David Cabot Van Sinderen, 48, California

Joyce Angela Skalla, 58, New Mexico

Susan Frances Strom, 44, Texas Denise June Thurman, 44, Texas

Gender, age and state issuing driver's license of the others whose names have not been released:

Male, 50, Arizona license, born in New York, passport issued in Los Angeles.

Male, 47, Lake Forest.

Female, 63, Albuquerque, N.M. Male, 44, Minnesota, born in Michigan, passport issued Los Angeles.

Female, 41, state license unknown, born in Texas, passport issued in Seattle.

1 - Acting SAC Ashley
1 - ASAC
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Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A-1 North County Times Escondido, CA

Date:

Edition:

Tuesday, 4/1/97

Title:

"Cultists had tiesin SD"

Character:

or

Classification:

Submitting Office

San Diego Indexing:



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Cultist had ties in SD

Local family discovers Monday that brother died in Heaven's Gate home

KAREN S. SMITH AND AND THE COUNTY TIMES OF THE COUNTY TIMES

SAN DIEGO — The worldwide news of the Rancho Santa Fe mass suicides hit home for four San Diego siblings Monday when they realized their brother was among the dead.

Felicia and Juanita Foster were watching an afternoon news conference on television when

Special Report: Mass Suicide

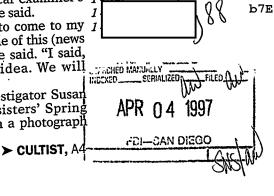
authorities named their brother, Alphonzo Ricardo Foster, 44, as one of 39 Heaven's Gate cult members found Wednesday.

For days the county Medical Examiner's Office had been trying to locate his family. The office broke its policy of not releasing names of the dead until next of kin are notified, hoping the media coverage would draw out the relatives.

Authorities went a step further too, broadcasting the names of Foster's brothers and sisters. The sisters, who live together, immediately called 1-Acting SAC Ashley their brothers, Ramon and Jose. 1-ASAC Then a neighbor watching the news with them phoned authorities, medical examiner's supervisor Cal Vine said.

"They wanted to come to my office in the middle of this (news conference)," Vine said. "I said, "It's not a good idea. We will come to you."

Vine sent Investigator Susar Mangun to the sisters' Spring Valley home with a photograph



➤ CULTIST

Continued from A1

of Alphonzo, his driver's license and his passport to confirm his identity.

"They hadn't seen him in years and just didn't expect it," Mangun said. The family hadn't been in contact with him for more than 20 years, Vine said.

Three of the siblings declined to speak to reporters Monday. Jose Foster could not be located.

Ever since the macabre discovery of the largest mass U.S. history, suicide in investigators tried in vain to find the relatives of Foster and Lindley Ayerhart Pease, 41. They were able to track down the names of Foster's four siblings but had not found them.

Investigators' only clues were that Foster was born in Detroit and had lived in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Pease's birth certificate is from Exeter, N.H. His sister, Sylvia, once lived in Palm Springs. His parents are dead. As of Monday evening, none of Pease's family had come forward, officials said.

There other new details

emerged Monday:

■ Eight of the 18 male cult members had been castrated, Medical Examiner Brian Blackbourne said. Blackbourne said Friday that six had had their testicles removed.

Toxicology tests found large doses of Vicodin in the bodies of the last two cult members to die nurses Julie LaMontague, 45, of Las Cruces, N.M., and Judith Ann Rowland, 50, of Dallas. Vicodin is a common pain reliever more potent than codeine. Two bottles of Vicodin were found in the home. The nurses also had plastic bags over their heads.

The other 37 bodies will be tested for Vicodin, available by prescription but obtainable over the counter in Mexico. Families also have requested HIV and AIDS testing of the bodies. The toxicology tests are expected to be completed Friday.

■ Sheriff's detectives passed along a tip to the FBI that another cult in a Southern state may be planning a mass suicide. Officials would not name the group or its

location.

Cult members died in three waves last week after ingesting a lethal mixture of phenobarbital in pudding and applesauce and washing it down with vodka. They also suffocated themselves with

plastic bags.

Sheriff's detectives still are trying to pinpoint where the barbiturate came from. Homicide Lt. Jerry Lipscomb speculated that cult members may have purchased it at a Tijuana pharmacy. Investigators have yet to review information stored in up to 14 computers and disks found in the cult's rented mansion. Even with the help of the FBI, the search could take six weeks, Lipscomb said.

Authorities said they received a bogus tip over the weekend about a group in southwest Arizona planning to connect with "the mother ship" and the 39 members of Heaven's Gate, Lipscomb said. The information

came from a web site.

Heaven's Gate cultists, who designed Web pages for a living, hoped their souls would rendezvous with a spaceship trailing the Hale-Bopp comet, for a ride to the "Evolutionary Level Above Human," according to their Internet writings. They believed their bodies were simply "human containers" that needed to be shed to reach the higher plane.

In addition to the bizarre Web postings, also puzzling is why the group left behind six well-stocked refrigerators, Lipscomb said.

"If they were taking off, why would they have this much food?" he asked. "It doesn't make sense."

Investigators have interviewed four to five former Heaven's Gate members who left the group before the suicides, including Richard B. Ford, 43, of Beverly Hills, who found the bodies Wednesday.

videotapes and a letter from Heaven's Gate cultists on March 25, describing their suicidal ritual. Lilli Ungar, spokeswoman for Interact Entertainment Group in Beverly Hills, where Ford has worked since disavowing the cult, said, "He has gone underground. He's not ready to meet the press yet."

So far, 11 bodies have been released to mortuaries to be. claimed by their families. Four families have arrived at the Medical Examiner's Office to Ford had received two make arrangements, officials rented since October.

said. The cult members were from eight states and

Washington, D.C.

A toll-free hot line the county set up for families to check if their relatives were among the dead has yielded more than 2,300 calls. The hot line has cost \$10,000. It's still unclear how much the investigation will cost the county.

Public The county Administrator's Office has collected the cult members' property from the home they had Michael J. Williams contributed to this

Among the items: a largescreen TV and entertainment center, two gas barbecues, a commercial dough mixer and approximately \$5,000 in cash.

Items not claimed by family members will be sold at a public auction, and the money raised will go into county coffers to cover the costs of the hot line and overtime pay for law enforcement personnel.

Staff writers D. Wade Booth and story.

The week that was

Heaven's Gate leaves its mark on San Diego

ith a week's hindsight, it may be time to offer a short summation of some recent events. It will be a long time before the words "Heaven's Gate" are forgotten in these parts.

It has been an extraordinary happening, not just for our times and for our community, but in the course of human events. Most people think of death as something to be put off as long as possible, and of suicide as a last resort, something connected with hopelessness and despair.

Heaven's Gate members held differ-

ent views. They appear to have welcomed death, and to have taken their lives hopefully, without despair, convinced they would hook up with the spaceship they believed traveling behind the Hale-Bopp comet.



Marshall Applewhite

Extraordinary as it was, it was hardly unprecedented. Look far enough into history and little is new, and even modern history offers parallels. Cults are as old and as strange as the human mystery itself. Human beings, who can never know all the answers, will never cease seeking them.

Thousands of cults and sects exist around the world, full of vulnerable individuals trying to answer the unanswerable. Many of these groups, perhaps most of them, have a guru, somebody whose power lies in being a self-proclaimed "seer," someone to whom "the truth" has been revealed and who is gifted in articulating it.

Sometimes, as in Marshall Apple-

white's case, the seer pretends to be possessed by a "higher source." He convinces followers it is not him speaking, but the angels themselves. Such self-assuredness, used on the lonely, the confused, the vulnerable, is a source of a great power. In Applewhite's case, it was powerful enough to lead his followers over the cliff.

They, of course, did not think they were going over the cliff, but to the promised land. Whoever's right about that, his power was clearly strong enough to overwhelm the basic human instinct for survival, which means it was powerful indeed.

Maybe some of the group, at the last minute, had second thoughts, but we still have no evidence of that. People who knew them — family members — seem unsurprised by the suicides. It looks like Applewhite, over two decades, was able to gather around him a coterie of disciples who believed enough in his weird mix of religion, astrology and science fiction to take their chances.

To see 39 generally healthy people pull the plug, heading for something called the "next level" is a shock. There will be lots of theories floated about this affair for years to come. The cosmos will be blamed, the millennium, alienation, brainwashing, "Star Trek," the Internet, maybe even fluoridation.

But to seek a single explantion is to oversimplify.

Heaven's Gate members thought they were on to something. They were almost certainly wrong, and the chances that they found their spaceship are not high.

To most of us, their decision was mindless, resulting in a needless waste of life. They knew that and took their chances anyway. End of story.

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

B-6 San Diego Union-Tribune San Diego, CA

Date: Edition:

Wednesday, 4/2/97

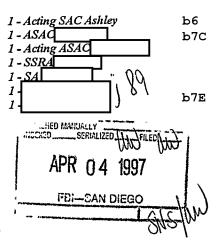
Title:

"The week that was"

Character:

Classification:

Submitting Office



Guns found in storage cultists had rented

By Kelly Thornton, Cheryl Clark and Caitlin Rother.

Firearms, including assault rifles and semiautomatic handguns, were discovered yesterday in two storage sheds rented by members of the Heaven's Gate suicide cult.

Sheriff's detectives found eight weapons during a search of Private Storage
Systems in Escondido. Officers were called Monday night by the storage units' owner who recognized names among the 39 who committed suicide in Rancho Santa Fe.

Inside the sheds were two assault rifles with scopes, a rifle, three revolvers and two semiautomatic handguns, along with books, videotapes and furniture, said Lt. Jerry Lipscomb.

Sheriff's officials said the findings are unimportant to the investigation of the deaths.

"The weapons are insignificant," Lipscomb said.
"That's because none of the 39 people were shot, the cult members were nonviolent, and there's no indication that the weapons have been used for any criminal activity."

In other developments surrounding the mass suicide which was discovered last Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A-1 San Diego Union-Tribune San Diego, CA

Date: Edition:

Wednesday, 4/2/97

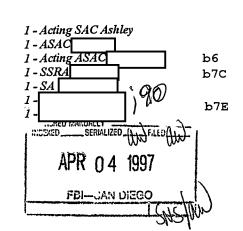
Title:

"Guns found in storage cultists had rented"

Character: or Classification:

Submitting Office





Cult

Sorting through items expected to take a week

Continued from A-1

Wednesday:

■ A county medical examiner's investigator who was involved in the removal of bodies from the home on Colina Norte was placed on paid leave Monday. Sources said Mark Malamatos, a three-year employee, was disciplined after he allegedly showed photographs of the decomposed bodies to people in a public setting several days ago.

Medical Examiner Brian Blackbourne declined comment, saying only that it was "a personnel mat-

ter."

Malamatos was among the first medical examiner's investigators on the death scene and spent about an hour Thursday afternoon helping move the 39 bodies from the mansion to a refrigerated trailer.

Contacted at home yesterday, Malamatos would not comment except to acknowledge that there were "a lot of rumors floating around and that they should be tak-

en with a grain of salt."

■ All the families of the suicide victims had been notified by Monday. The final call to the medical examiner was from the sister of Lindley Ayerhart Pease, 41. Twenty-two bodies had been released to mortuaries as of yesterday.

After performing 10 autopsies that indicated Heaven's Gate members all committed suicide, the medical examiner stopped doing full-scale examinations on the re-

mainder.

Blackbourne said his pathologists were simplifying the process, making sure there was no trauma or injury and taking fluid samples for toxicology tests.

The decision was made because of "the crush of the work," Blackbourne said. "And we already had a

good indication that suicide was going to be the cause of death."

The Heaven's Gate members drank alcohol and barbiturates and had plastic bags over their heads in their quest to shed their "containers" and rise to a higher level on a UFO trailing the Hale-Bopp comet.

■ Sam Koutchesfahani, owner of the estate rented by Heaven's Gate, told CBS News yesterday that cult members sent him a letter to say goodbye and thank him for his friendship. He said he received the letter on Saturday along with money orders to cover back rent.

At the storage facility, detectives collected firearms, and two truckloads of computers, cult recruiting pamphlets, artwork, journals, notebooks, essays, videotapes and furniture from two 10-by-10-foot storage sheds, Lipscomb said.

The firearms were impounded by sheriff's officials and taken to the crime lab, where technicians will check serial numbers to make sure the weapons were legally obtained and were not used in any crimes.

The weapons did not appear to violate California's ban on assault weapons, Lipscomb said, adding,

"They were not AK-47s."

A 9mm semiautomatic handgun had been found earlier in a cult member's packed suitcase in the rented Rancho Santa Fe mansion. He and others apparently believed they would take the suitcases with them into space, said Cal Vine, supervising medical examiner's investigator. An ex-member of Heaven's Gate told Vine that the gun in the suitcase was used for target practice.

Most of the items recovered yesterday were taken to the county's public administrator/guardian's office on Ruffin Road for storage.

Lipscomb said it will be at least a week before detectives can sort through everything. "We need to step back, see what we have, prioritize everything and develop a plan of attack." Among the new items were two painted wooden signs that

UNION-TRIBUNE

(619) 293-21

The San Diego Union-Tribune is committed to learning more about groups like Heaven's

We would like your help. If you have loved ones who are involved in a cult, we would like to hear from you. We have set up telephone and computer mailboxes that will be accessible 24 hours a day. We ask that, in addition to other information, you leave your name and how we may contact you.

We do not seek to condemn or vilify any group. We simply want to understand - and to pass that understanding on to our réaders.

You may leave an e-mail message at metro@uniontrib.com or a voice mail message at (619) 293-2156.

said "ESTATE SALE" and two clothes dryers marked with price tags for \$250 and \$175. "They may have been trying to sell this stuff, said Kent Schirmer of the administrator/guardian's office.

In fact, Lois Sheldon, a Del Cerro resident who shops estate sales to stock her thrift stores, said she believes cult members hosted a sale she attended in November in Rancho Santa Fe.

"They were very nice, very polite, but kind of secretive," Sheldon said. "They wouldn't share anything about themselves except that they were a monastery and moving away.

"They seemed rich. I thought, what's a monastery doing with all this fine furniture and how are they affording this house? They had leather sofas, leather chairs, beautiful glass coffee tables and thousand-dollar bedroom sets."

In storage was one cardboard box labeled "original artwork inside." It contained what appeared to be color xeroxes of drawings titled "Exploring the Universe." They depicted aliens, figures in spacecrafts and configurations of spaceships, captioned "interplanetary shuttle crafts."

A manila envelope held an essay entitled, "The Meaning of the Human Race," and a computer diskette labeled "August 1987, Physical Reality of the Next Level, Ollody,"

Five mattresses, similar to those cushioning the bodies at the mansion, were wrapped in factory plastic. A variety of other items included bunk bed frames, rolled-up sleeping bags, folding tables, discarded computer parts, towels, metal boxes filled with tools, a satellite dish antenna still in its original box, and some tripods.

Susan Jamme, the deputy public administrator/guardian who is handling the cult members' estate, said she was surprised to find weaponry in storage. She had found no trace of a National Rifle Association membership, for example, or anything else of that nature at the mansion.

"If that's something that you care about, then you usually get involved with people who do," Jamme said.

Jim Thorsen, who bought 40 acres of forested land in central New Mexico from the cult early last year, said yesterday that he saw no evidence of weapons at the isolated mountainside site.

"Nothing, not at all," said Thorsen, a New Mexico patriot-move-ment leader who lives on the site near Manzano, a high-plains hamlet 60 miles southeast of Albuquerque. It is believed that about 40 members of the cult lived at the location for several months in 1995.

Staff writer Phil LaVelle and the Associated Press contributed to this report.



Surviving cultists plan secret meeting

The New York Times quoted a former cult member as saying that there were hundreds of surviving Heaven's Gate followers, some of whom were planning a secret meeting this week.

"I personally know about 60 to 80, but I feel there are hundreds," said former cult member Aaron Greenberg of Eugene, Orc., who keeps up with followers through a loose telephone network. "There are about 1,000 people who passed, through this thing."

Greenberg said he spoke on the phone Monday with a man in Canada who is part of a group of 40 believers, and with another man in New York who is part of a group of 60. Both men, Greenberg said, told him that the cult followers, who meet periodically, were converging this week on a secret site in the Southwest.

"This is not a good thing,"
warned Greenberg, who left the
group in 1976 after six months.
"Remember what they say in
the (farewell) videotapes:
'Come join us, the time is now,
the window is small."

Time for a change: A Casper, Wyo, church that named itself for a statement attributed to Jacob in a Genesis story is considering changing its name because of last week's mass suicide.

The Rev. Robert Gilmore of Heaven's Gate Ministries said his church has no connection to the cult. But he said that since the cult members' bodies were found in Rancho Santa Fe; his church has received numerous phone calls ranging from cranks to requests for media interviews.

"We are not these people; we'd never heard of them," Gilmore said of his 50-member Pentecostal congregation. "My phone's been ringing since Thursday and hasn't been quitting"

He said the calls prompted church leaders to remove the sign hanging over his church, which is affiliated with the 1 million-member Pentecostal Assemblies of the World Inc. Gilmore said. The congregation chose its name from a statement Jacob made after dreaming of a stairway to heaven: This is

none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven?

Downloading data: FBI computer experts, including three from San Francisco and two from Los Angeles, were expected to arrive in San Diego today to begin the fedious process of extracting information from more than a dozen computers and many diskettes left behind by the cult members, said Sheriff's homicide Lt. Jerry Lipscomb.



The Rev. Billy Graham: "I believe Satan has his plan."

A Satanic plans. The Rev. Billy Graham, famous for preaching with a Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other, said the Heaven's Gate mass suicide was the work of the devil.

"I believe Satan has his plan," Graham said Tuesday as he prepared to launch what may be his last south Texas crusade."

Graham said he understands the powerful intrigue of the heavens, referring to the Hale-Bopp comet that Heaven's Gate members took as the sign that it was time for them to shed their bodies for a new life with space aliens. But he warned against people such as Heaven's Gate leader Marshall Applewhite, calling him a fanatic who led people astray.

"He becomes a god to himself and to those around him?" Graham said. "In back of it all is the devil."

From Union-Tribune staff and news services

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A-18 San Diego Union-Tribune San Diego, CA

Date: Edition:

Thursday, 4/3/97

Title:

"Surviving cultists plan secret meeting"

Character:

or

Classification:

Submitting Office

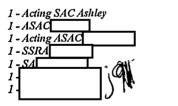
San Diego Indexing:

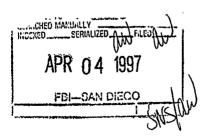


b6

b7C

b7E





UPDATE

Additional profiles of the cult members

More biographical information about the participants in the cult suicide in Rancho Santa Fe emerges daily. Here is the latest

Judith Ann Rowland 50. Ojai. Calif.

She left her husbland and two young children more than 20 years ago, saying in a farewell letter that she was "soon to be a member of the next kingdom."

Before the letter, Robert Rowland, now 58, had no idea his wife was involved in a cult.

A former department store model, Judith Rowland attended meetings of the group that later became known as Heaven's Gate. She went with her mother, Lorraine Wilber, to the former Oaks Hotel in Ojai, where the group began recruiting in March 1975. She was 28.

Rowland, known as "Fleece," was among the cult's founding members.

Wilber, 78, said her daughter was happy when she visited her in Rolla, Mo., last November and December. Wilber has lived in Rolla for the past 15 years.

"I'd much rather have her there (with the cult) than on the street." Wilber said of her daughter's involvement with Heaven's Gate. "The public has made cults all negative, and it shouldn't be. They're trying to find God and they're pretty good people."

Wilber knew Marshall Applewhite, the 65-year-old leader, in the early days of the cult, and said he was the most "loving and caring" person she ever met.

"I never had such wonderful teachings," Wilber said: She chose to leave the group, however, because she was older than other members.

"It was one big, happy family, working and trying to show the world what it was like on the good side."

In her letter to her husband, Judith said, "I will not be back, so please start making plans for your new life. I am doing greater works for 'Him,' and I will have eternal life."

The couple's two children, Joey and Cynthia, had the grim task of retrieving their mother's body from the San Diego Medical Examiner's Office on Tuesday.

Staff writer Susan Gembrowski and news services contributed to this report. Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A-18 San Diego Union-Tribune San Diego, CA

Date: Edition:

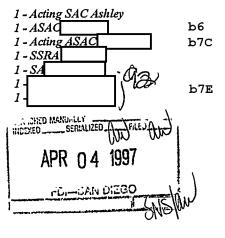
Thursday, 4/3/97

Title:

"Additional profiles of the cult members"

Character: or Classification:

Submitting Office



Members of Heaven's Gate enjoyed Vegas' earthly lures

By Caitlin Rother

STAFF WRITER

A month before they committed mass suicide with the hope of riding a spaceship to the "next level," members of the Heaven's Gate cult relished more earthly pleasures at the Stratosphere Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

They took \$1,900 for gambling and \$3,500 for expenses, spending \$123 to take rides on the free-falling Big Shot and the High Roller

roller coaster 850 feet above ground.

Their winnings didn't amount to much, according to handwritten entries in their cash ledger now held by the county public administrator/guardian's office.

Cult members won a total of \$58.91 at the gaming tables and slots and found \$2.30 in change.

See CULT on Page A-19

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A-1 San Diego Union-Tribune San Diego, CA

Date: Edition:

Thursday, 4/3/97

Title:

"Members of Heaven's Gate enjoyed Vegas' earthly lures"

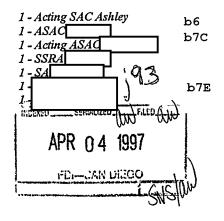
Character:

or

Classification:

Submitting Office





Cult

Members took part in some earthly pleasures

Continued from A-1

They spent \$406 on gas, \$264 on buffets and \$2.28 on water, the

ledger entries say.

To an outside observer, their trip might seem to conflict with the strict regimentation that marked the cult's daily lives at the Rancho Santa Fe mansion where they were found dead last Wednesday.

'Based on belongings found in their rented home, recreational activities appeared to be mostly limited to watching television. And even that was done under a strict routine with a seating chart and pre-ap-

proved programs.

But according to a former member of 18 years, the pleasure-seeking trip to Las Vegas was not out of character for the group of people who were continually striving to

improve themselves.

In a telephone interview from western Canada last night, Frank Lyford laughed when he heard about the trip and laughed again when he learned how much they won and what they spent it on.

He said he didn't know exactly what was going through their minds, but his "best guess" was that they went purely for fun. This wasn't the first time they had gone to Las Vegas to gamble.

Before he left the group in 1993, he' said, the cult had visited the neon strip and stayed for days at a time. They even considered moving

there at one time.

"(Gambling) wasn't considered a waste of money. In a way, it was considered money well spent because whether or not we won anything didn't matter, it was a release that was harmless otherwise. . . . We weren't there for the seedier side of things, obviously."

In the past, he said, the group also had outings to museums, and took boat trips to Catalina Island.

Lyford also said that it had been the cult's practice for years to watch only television and pay-peryiew movies on cable that had been approved by a designated group member.

Two lists of acceptable programs were found taped to the inside of a cabinet containing videotapes.

In addition to helping members avoid the "outright garbage on TV," the list helped them devote all their energy to the improvement of themselves "without having your vibration changed."

- For example, he said, that meant members were kept from watching programs featuring explicit sex, which they were instructed to avoid

in their own lives as well.

"We were in fact trying to convert that energy. We didn't want to stimulate that energy. (The list) was to assist us, not to restrict us."

For example, the television list allowed viewing of one show every weeknight and several on weekend nights. The shows included "Chicago-Hope," "Voyager," "Deep Space 9," "X-Files," and "Millennium."

The list of approved cable movies was accompanied by short descrip-

tions. These included:

"Gandhi" starring Ben Kingsley. "We may have already seen this, and it may be too long, 195 minutes."

"For All Mankind.' This might prove to be a few laughs. This is the official account of NASA's Apollo

moon mission."

-, "'Eddie.' Whoopi Goldberg plays the first female coach of the New York Knicks"

New York Knicks."

"'Magic in the Water.' A film about a family encountering a friendly version of the lochness (sic) monster."

"Asteroid." (No description.)

The banned movies included: "The Island of Dr. Moreau," starring Marlon Brando; "Multiplicity," starring Michael Keaton; and "Golden Eye," starring Pierce Brosnan as James Bond.

SHARED DELUSION

Most of the 39 were not insane, experts conclude

By Susan Duerksen STAFF WRITER

Killing one's body to catch a spaceship to a higher plain of existence defies prevailing notions of sanity.

To many, it seems blatantly cra-

But mental health experts say most of the 39 individuals who methodically cut short their own lives last week probably were mentally normal.

In a testament to the frightening power of cults, psychiatrists and psychologists say the believers could have been almost anyone, given the right timing.

"We'd like to think they're all nuts," said Dr. Marcella Wilson, a San Diego forensic psychiatrist. "Unfortunately, they're not. It could happen to anybody. That's really scary for a lot of people."

The members of the Heaven's Gate cult, like followers of many other cults, were suffering from a psychological condition known as "shared delusional disorder," psychiatrists and psychologists agree.

They had bought into a collective delusion — a fixed belief they clung to despite any and all evidence to the contrary.

In this case, the delusion was created by charismatic leader Marshall Applewhite, who mental health experts believe probably was psychotic. He convinced his followers that a spaceship trailing the Hale-Bopp comet would carry them to a better world if they abandoned their human bodies.

So how did a group of mentally normal people come to believe that story at the cost of their lives? Through a series of gradual steps, several experts agreed.

Most people enter cults when a crisis or low point in their lives has made them especially needy and vulnerable, Wilson said. They need to belong, to find meaning in life, to depend on someone else.

"People feel demoralized, isolated," said Dr. Saul Levine, a psychiatrist at UCSD and Children's Hospital who has studied cults for 20 years. "They have underlying issues, but that doesn't make them psychiatrically disturbed."

"When they join the group, they feel tremendously better about themselves. There's such hope and optimism and passion and specialness being offered to these people."

Based on interviews with 1,500 members of at least 40 cults, Levine said he has concluded that cults attract people in emotional pain but cults have no more mentally ill members than the general population.

Dr. Edward Mohns, head of psychiatry at Scripps Clinic, said not everyone is equally vulnerable to cults. Those who join tend to be "deeply immature and have a powerful need for group approval and group acceptance," he said.

But many people can be thrown temporarily into that childlike state by life crises, Wilson said. If they are drawn into a cult at that point and grow to trust and depend on the group, they can develop a delusional disorder out of commitment to their new "family," she said.

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

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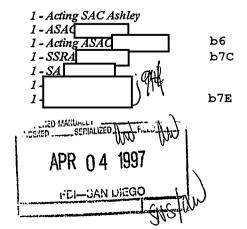
Title:

"Shared Delusion"

Character: or Classification:

Submitting Office



















Farewell: Several members of the Heaven's Gate cult appeared on a videotape explaining their reasons for wishing to abandon their physical bodies. Experts say the members bought into a collective delusion — a fixed belief they clung to despite evidence to the contrary.

"To be offered a simple, delusional belief system in the context of a surrogate family is very powerful," said Reid Meloy, a forensic psychologist and UCSD psychiatry professor. "Delusions are wonderful defenses against emotional pain and distress."

Cults almost always have one or two dynamic, mesmerizing leaders who become nurturing parental figures for the members, taking over responsibility for their daily lives as well as their values, Wilson said. To question their beliefs becomes unthinkable.

Psychiatrists commonly see a similar pattern in the families of psychotic patients, said Dr. Mark Kalish, a forensic psychiatrist. The rest of the family often goes along with the psychotic delusions rather than risk disrupting the family, he said.

Unlike conventional religions, which also offer group acceptance and unprovable belief systems, cults impose severe restrictions on members in order to build and maintain members' devotion to the shared delusion.

Most importantly, cult members are isolated from family and friends who might dispute the new beliefs. In many cases, including Heaven's Gate, the members live together.

They also are physically deprived — of food, sex and other pleasures — which weakens rational thinking, Meloy said. The Heaven's Gate members were expected to be celibate and eight of the men had been castrated. Their clothing, hairstyles and the minutiae of their daily routines were regimented.

Most people who join cults drop out within two years, Levine said. Those who stay have become delusional, accepting fully the group belief. They cannot be shaken from their faith by reality.

"Argumentation only reinforces their group delusional belief," Mohns said. "It confirms their specialness."

The Heaven's Gate members 'ig' nored scientific evidence that no spaceship is following the Hale-Bopp comet, including their own inability to find it with a state-of the-art telescope.

But aside from their immutable belief in Applewhite's theory, they apparently were functioning, rational and completely sane, Wilson said.

"They (were) in touch with reality except for in that specific area."

Cult's Members Enjoyed Many Earthly Pleasures

■ **Heaven's Gate:** Financial ledger shows a frugal group enjoying outings to Las Vegas, Sea World and Mexico.

By TONY PERRY TIMES STAFF WRITER

RANCHO SANTA FE, Calif.— Even as they prepared to commit suicide because life in this world was no longer bearable, members of the Heaven's Gate cult enjoyed some earthly pleasures: Gambling in Las Vegas, visiting Sea World, Mexico and San Diego's Wild Animal Park, and taking a bus trip through scenic parts of Northern California and southern Oregon.

In Las Vegas, the cultists visited the Stratosphere Hotel amusement park in late February and won more than \$20 at the slot machines. Dedicated penny-pinchers, cult members ate at hotel buffets rather than restaurants.

The group may have been drawn to the gambling mecca not by the lure of easy money or roller-coaster thrills but by a public meeting to discuss Area 51, that part of the Nevada desert thought by ufologists to be where the Air Force has kept an alien spacecraft under wraps for decades.

Beyond the slots, the group had another stroke of good fortune. One cultist found \$20 and dutifully turned it over to the communal treasury.

Finding lost money was an obsession. The final entry in Heaven's Gate meticulously kept financial ledger was from March 21, five days before the corpses were found. The entry indicated Please see CULT, A25

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A1 Los Angeles Times Los Angeles, CA

Date: Edition:

Thursday, 4/3/97

Title:

"Cult's Members Enjoyed Many Earthly Pleasures"

Character: or Classification:

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1 - SSRA 1 - SA	b7E
APR 0 4 1997	W)
FBI—SAN DIEGO	ENET (M)

CULT: Members Enjoyed Earthly Pleasures

Continued from A1

that two cultists had found 6 cents.

The ledger, now in the hands of San Diego County officials, provides a vivid glimpse into the cult's final days and weeks before they killed themselves in hopes that a spaceship would take them to the "next level."

One entry indicates that some of the cultists belonged to a group dental plan. Several paid to have their teeth cleaned in the weeks before they killed themselves by drinking vodka and eating phenobarbital-laced pudding and applesauce.

Although celibate and teetotalers, the cultists satisfied their cravings for candy, maple syrup, cookies, soda pop and pizza. When investigators found the 39 corpses at the mansion on Colina Norte, they also found seven quarts of Starbuck's Java Chip ice cream in the freezer.

The ledger and other documents belonging to the cult indicate that even after the group made the fateful decision to commit mass suicide, cult members still attended to small household chores: paying rent, paying a \$2.50 library fine, and stocking groceries.

Even the farewell tapes made March 19 did not seem to disrupt the group's mania for cleanliness, orderliness and financial tidiness. After making the tapes, the group enjoyed a trip to a pizza

Insurer Stops Issuing Policies on Abductions by Space Aliens

LONDON—The company that insured the 39 members of the Heaven's Gate cult against abduction by aliens said it stopped writing alien-related policies after the group's mass suicide.

The cult members paid \$1,000 on Oct. 10 for a policy that covered up to 50 members and would pay out \$1 million a person for abduction, impregnation or death caused by aliens.

"Because of the manipulation of malevolent third parties, innocent lives were wrecked," Simon Burgess, managing director of the Goodfellow Rebecca Ingrams Pearson insurance company, said Wednesday. "I am deeply shocked and saddened, and that's why we're withdrawing from the [alien abduction insurance] market. . . . We don't wish to contribute to a repetition of the Heaven's Gate deaths."

He said the group discovered his company provided alien abduction insurance via the Internet.

The 39 members took their own lives last week at a home in Rancho Santa Fe, seeking redemption in a spaceship they believed was trailing Comet Hale-Bopp.

The beneficiary of the policy was the Society of Heaven's Gate, said Burgess.

He said the cult had paid the premium and the annual policy remains in force until Oct. 9. "They would have to prove that they were abducted," he added.

—Associated Press

parlor—tab: \$417.27—and attended the movie "Secrets & Lies," where they drank \$75 worth of soda.

The final days of Heaven's Gate appear to have been a combination of fun outings and mundane chores. The entire cult membership went to Las Vegas. In March they visited the Wild Animal Park, spending

\$664.95 for admission, \$81.94 for ice cream and \$80 for food to feed the animals. (The park allows visitors to feed the ducks and animals at the "petting zoo.")

Later, several went to Mexico, probably to Tijuana. About that time, cultists saw a homeless person and gave him \$2.

Four cultists went on a bus trip

through Santa Rosa, Sacramento, and Gold Beach, Ore., before returning through Santa Clarita, where they stopped to eat at Burger King. The ride must have been smooth. The bus driver was given a \$10 tip.

Judging from the truckloads of belongings seized by county officials, life in Heaven's Gate was orderly and structured (there was a master list for haircuts) but not severe or without fun.

"These were people who had to make no decisions about their lives," said Susan Jamme, deputy public guardian/administrator for San Diego County, whose job has taught her how to reconstruct the lives of the newly departed based on what they leave behind. "Everything was very orderly and programmed."

Like many an American family, Heaven's Gate apparently made television the centerpiece of its social life—television usage that was highly regimented.

Each cultist was assigned a seat near the 72-inch television, the largest of the six televisions found in the mansion. Only approved shows were allowed on the big set.

Cheryl Elaine Butcher, 43, who joined the group in 1976, was in charge of approving all television watching, possibly with a veto by cult leader Marshall Applewhite.

On the approved list for one week were a PBS documentary

about Thomas Jefferson and the movies "Chain Reaction" with Keanu Reeves, "The Frighteners" with Michael J. Fox, and "Eddie" with Whoopi Goldberg.

Rejected for viewing were "GoldenEye" with Pierce Brosnan, "The Island of Dr. Moreau" with Marlon Brando, and "Multiplicity" with Michael Keaton. No reasons for the rejections were included and none apparently was needed for the cult members to obey.

A note attached to the approved viewing list seems to indicate the cult's disbelief in the official explanations of matters involving outer space. A documentary about the U.S. space program is approved but with the wry comment, "This might prove to be a few laughs. This is the official version of NASA's Apollo moon mission."

Former cultists have said the group, by Applewhite's order, would arise before sun-up to meditate and gaze at stars. But the cult also tried to stay current with news events. The CBS show "60 Minutes" was on the approved list, and the cult subscribed to the San Diego Union-Tribune and the Galactic Observer newsletter.

The cultists were not readers. They were television and video watchers and movie lovers. Only a few dozen books were found in the mansion—mostly Christian Bibles, books about home remedies and cures, tracts about UFOs, and three copies of Applewhite's rambling

manifesto, "How & When Heaven's Gate (The Door to the Physical Kingdom Above Human) May Be Entered."

Several boxes of videos were found, including the "farewell" videos made a week before the bodies were found.

Jamme was struck both by the orderliness of the house and by the lack of personal items: no pictures of the families or lives that the cultists had left behind and almost: no pictures of the cultists, save the eerie, androgynous images on the videos. "The dishes were washed, the glasses were lined up, the silverware was polished, the trash was taken out," Jamme said. "They were clean. They were beyond clean."

Although money was apparently tight, the cult was not bankrupt. The ledger indicates a balance of \$12,183.21 in an unnamed account, and investigators found \$5,400 at the mansion.

Under county policy, the cult's belongings will be sold at auction by the public guardian's office, probably next month, to pay for the costs of handling the case.

Among those things to be sold will be humidifiers, rugs, lawn furniture, the cots and bunk beds where the bodies were found, a vacuum cleaner, a massage table, Flintstones lunch boxes, a minitrampoline and a T-shirt with the picture of an alien and the logo "FARFROMHOME."

More prized items could be two "Star Wars" hats with the logo "May the Force Be With You."

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Precedence: PRIORITY Date: 04/03/1997	
To: Honolulu San Diego Attn: North County RA SSRA SA	b6 b7С
From: Duisville Squad 5 Contact: SA 502/569-3810	
Approved By: Drafted By:	b6 b7С
Case ID #: (Pending)	b7E
Title: HEAVENS GATE, 18241 COLINA NORTE, RANCHO SANTA FE, CALIFORNIA; MASS SUICIDE OF THIRTY-NINE INDIVIDUALS, 03/26/1997; AOT - DT - VC Synopsis: Transmittal of e-mail (01/17/1997) possibly related to	
subject matter. Reference: Serial 4	b7E
Enclosures: E-mail from to dated 01/17/1997, possibly related to Heavens Gate.	ь6 ь7С
Details: On 04/03/1997, , employed by	b6 b7С
Louisville Division for possible assistance to local authorities investigating mass suicide of Heavens Gate cult members on 03/26/1997, at Rancho Santa Fe, California. **Tuclosure foxed SDSO** APR 07 1997 FBI-SAN DIEGO**	b6 b7c
& crm 417197(4)	/2

To: Honolulu From: Louisville
Re: 04/03/1997

Cursory review of enclosure reveals references to	
all of	
whom may be or may have been affiliated with Heavens Gate.	
Reference is made to (unnamed) who "have	
given up all their worldly possessions (and their consulting	
business) and moved from Rancho Santa Fe, California, to a high-	b6
end, gated community in Wallea, Maui (with leased furniture).	b70
This is to say that these are not exactly flakey hippie-types	
living in their VW vans is planning to	
dematerialize in March, and will be left behind to	
communicate her messages to us of more earthly constitution"	
and had some type of marketing and/or consulting	
thing going, one which required them to work only a few hours per	
month and provide enough income for them to live in an expensive	
resort community in one of the most beautiful places on the	
planet."	

b7E

In view of Bureau position of offering assistance to San Diego Sheriff's Office, San Diego Division may wish to disseminate enclosure to said agency for review, analysis, and possible investigative lead at Wallea, Maui, Hawaii.

From: SMTP 17-JAN-1997 19:55:25,38 b6 To: b7C CC: Subl: Re: Maul K. vacatlon reminiscences Resent-Date: Fri, 17 Jan 1997 18:55:01 -0600 Message-ID Date: Fri, 17 Jan 1997 16:55:48 -0800 From Reply-To: Organization: Mr. Film X-Mailer: Mozilla 3.0 (Win95; I) MIME-Version: 1.0 **b**6 To: b7C Subject: Re: Maui K. vacation reminiscences References: Content-Type: text/plain; charset=us-ascii Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit Resent-Message-ID: Resent-From: X-Mailing-List: X-Loop: Precedence: list Resent-Sender: b6 wrote: b7C > Hi all, Mr. Idle Curiosity here again. Hi! > Someone mentioned they had vacationed in Maui over the holidays 'Twas I, > and encountered Beloved and would post soon about their > experience. b6 b7C Well, no, I didn't encounter (who, as far as I know is and has been in South America). Rather, I encountered and his wife who have been posting (and channeling) a lot of the Hale-Bopp stuff. I guess it would be fair to say that they regard (who I did not run across, but I'm sure I would have had I been there another few days) somewhat cautiously, even though they have been echoing one b6 another to some extent. Apparently they feel that may have b7C gone a bit out on a limb, what with all the specific dates in his predictions and so on. They cautioned against naming precise dates when making channeled predictions, saying that those sources from other dimensions have a bit of a disadvantage, since time is not a factor on these other "planes." That would account for a fair amount of error, of course.

TEL:

They are an interesting duo. They have given up all their worldly possessions (and their consulting business) and moved from Rancho Santa Fe, Calif. to a high-end, gated community in Wallea, Maui (with leased furniture). This is to say that these are not exactly flakey

furniture). This is to say that these are not exactly flakey hippie-types living in their VW van	
They also cautioned against giving up all one's worldly posessions	
is planning to dematerialize in March, and will be left behind to communicate her messages to us of more earthly constitution.	b6 b7C
They were nice enough to remove some kind of etheric weapon (sword?? arrow??) which apparently had pierced my left shoulder. I must say, I *have* felt much better since the operation	
I did an hour-long interview with them as background material for a film project I'm working on. I take no position, rather I'm interested in the entire phenomenon.	
> Dld I miss it, or has the person (I cant remember > who it was) changed their mind?	
I've been really busy	
> Since has informed us that he will soon be the Allens' > human llaison after the mass landings happen, it behooves us > all to learn about our future leader.	ь6 ь70
Just what the heck is he up to with his Alien K Technology MultilevelMarketing Corporation (c)(tm)(pat.pending.) anyway?	
Don't know about this, but I do know thatandhad some sort of marketing and/or consulting thing going, one which required them to work only a few hours per month and provide enough income for them to live in a expensive resort community in one of the most beautiful places on the planet. So may well be on the right track!	b6 b7С
Alas, must get back to work	

Final item in cult's ledger: 6¢

Every transaction listed 'way beyond meticulous'

By Joe Cantlupe and David Hasemyer STAFF WRITERS

They were so precise, they counted to the last nickel.

Actually, 6 cents. "06." (FOUND).

That was the final entry made March 22 in

pencil in the simple blue ledger in which Heaven's Gate cult members definancial tailed their transactions.

The journal was among boxes of documents and papers found in the Rancho Santa Fe mansion where 39 members of the cult killed themselves last week, concluding a bizarre philosophical sojourn.

As they prepared to go to what they termed the "higher level," they were grounded to the free enterprise reality of assets and debits. The last entry revealing two members finding 6 cents was made the day authorities believe the first series of suicides was carried out.

The Heaven's Gate cult members apparently did a better job of household accounting than most people do with their own checkbooks. The ledger records every financial transaction from Jan. 1 to Saturday, March 22, the day cult



Cult SUICIDE

Inside

Grand finale: Cult members spent last days traveling, dining out. A-23

Village life: Rancho Santa Fe Association glad to see normalcy return. B-1

Religion & Ethics: Cult is not alone in selective attention to Bible. E-1

Indicate page. newspaper, city, state

San Diego Union Tribune San Diego, Ca

Date: Edition:

Friday, 4/4/97 North Coast

Title:

"Final Item in Cults Ledger: 6 Cents"

Character:

or

Classification:

Submitting Office

1 - A/SAC Ashley

I - ASAC

San Diego Indexing:

- A/ASAC 1 - SSRA 1 - SA Case File b7E ...CHED MANUALLY

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APR 08 1997 feil-gan diego

Money

'This goes way beyond meticulous'

Continued from A-1

members began the first of three

stages of mass suicide.

"This goes way beyond meticulous.... Their precision was on a different level," said Susan Jamme, the county deputy public administrator assigned to settle the Heaven's Gate estate.

"It was like a machine."

Heaven's Gate members valued money as it suited their purposes. And their goals were to transform themselves into another level, committing suicide to join up with a UFO winging upward on the tail of a comet.

"Money was not an end in itself," said former cult member Frank Lyford, who had belonged to the group for 18 years until 1993. "Money was simply a way that allowed us to have shelter and creature comforts in order to pursue

our self-betterment."

So when they sold a makeshift compound in the hills of New Mexico a year ago, they described the deal in handwritten documents as a

"Launchpad transaction."

Heaven's Gate cult members accounted for every last penny. When members brought money home from their jobs, the amount was written down. When they went to the movies, when they bought poporn, when they went to Las Vegas or Sea World, they meticulously jotted down every expense. And when they found money on the sidewalks, they noted doing so in unembellished handwriting, like that of a bookkeeper.

When two cult members once found a penny, the event was recorded as a deposit transaction and listed — as ".01" (FOUND) — in

the ledger.

The cult members appeared to live comfortably. On New Year's Day 1997, they had \$10,227.85 in cash on hand. On March 22, the day that the first series of suicides began, a ledger entry for that day shows a cash balance of \$12,183.21.

Indeed, a large amount of cash was found around the Rancho Santa Fe house, stacks of \$50 and \$100 bills in an upstairs bedroom.

"I don't think they had wild, extravagant wants, but they weren't Spartans," Jamme said.

The cult's sources of income were diverse.

Many worked for the cult's own computer company, Higher Source Contract Enterprises, which designed Web pages and recorded an income of \$111,980.01 by the end of 1996.

Others had individual incomes. One member contributed \$1,900 in one month. Another contributed his \$459 monthly worker's compensation payment, according to the journal entries. The smallest individual contribution was \$156 in a month.

And they shared. Whatever money individual members earned, received or found was expected to be contributed to the Heaven's Gate pot. The \$300,000 inherited by some members in the early 1970s was contributed as readily as change picked up off the street.

The office in the Rancho Santa Fe house included a shredder and a fax machine and what county officials considered an unusual sight in a file cabinet: a communal stock of

totally empty wallets.

Jamme, the county deputy public administrator, believes that whenever a member left the house, he or she would take a wallet.

"The individual changed their assets to communal assets," said Jamme. "Nothing belonged to anybody. What they really had was a 1/39th interest in everything."

The one-for-all philosophy was embraced by the cult since its beginnings two decades ago, regardless of its members' financial stand-

ings, or whether they lived in a vagabond encampment or in a luxurious mansion.

"We were a self-contained subculture, so the money we made individually we contributed to the pot, to the whole," former cult member Lyford said.

Though Marshall Applewhite was clearly the philosophical leader, there is no evidence in the documents that he exercised that same total control over day-to-day finances. There was a designated purser, although former members say they often took turns handling financial matters.

One person had the duty to keep logs in the ledger, though the initials of other members were listed on other documents, records show.

Jamme and others trying to sort out the cult's finances believe they were for the most part a group of responsible individuals who apparently paid their bills on time. Though occasionally individuals used personal credit cards for entertainment such as Las Vegas hotel rooms, Heaven's Gate was primarily a cash operation. Usually two members of the group would take cash and obtain money orders to pay bills, such as their \$6,792

monthly rent for the Rancho Santa Fe house.

The members were normally paired and were assigned their daily tasks, according to Lyford, the former cult member.

"There were people who took care of various tasks, and the chief responsibilities were rotated, in a series of teams and subteams," Lyford said in a telephone interview from his home in western Canada.

Yet there were contradictions in the cult's financial situation.

While they were maintaining more than \$10,000 in cash in the extravagant house, taking trips and eating at restaurants, they appeared anxious that the cult-owned computer company immediately collect \$500 it was owed.

"They actually asked ahead of time for the money as if they were semi-desperate," said Tom Goodspeed of the San Diego Polo Club, which hired the cult's computer company to design Web sites on the Internet.

One of the cult's largest deals before moving to San Diego was selling its 40-acre compound in Manzano, N.M., a year ago.

There was an unusual twist to the transaction: For security, the

cult held 46 \$20 gold coins — worth \$2,160 — owned by the buyer of the property. The coins were stored in a bank safe-deposit box until the buyer's loan was approved.

The sale of the tract, where the cult camped from nearly June 1995 to April 1996 and fashioned a compound of tires and earth, eventually generated \$60,000 for the Heaven's Gate cult, which was then preparing for its final ritual passage in California.

In the 11 months before their suicide, they dutifully continued to log their financial activities for the common good of the group. On March 22 — the last entry — two members found the 6 cents.

Rolls of quarters and \$5 bills were found in the pockets of each of the 39 cult members after they poisoned and asphyxiated themselves, reportedly so they wouldn't get arrested for vagrancy on their journey.

Unlike the hundreds of thousands of dollars they had pooled together through the years, the money is legally considered their individual property, not communal.

So it was in death that one of the rules they lived by was broken, that

all money must be shared.



L'AURA EMBRY / Union-Tribune

 $\textbf{Left behind:} \ Among \ the \ items \ confiscated \ from \ the \ Rancho \ Santa \ Fe \ home \ where \ Heaven's$ Gate members lived was a T-shirt with an extraterrestrial theme. The cult's property is now being stored at the county public administrator's office.

Members of group spent final days enjoying some normal pleasures

By Kelly Thornton STAFF WRITER

Heaven's Gate cult members spent their last days the way a terminally ill person might: traveling, sightseeing and dining out with their best friends.

About two weeks before their bodies were discovered in a Rancho Santa Fe mansion, the group spent a day at the Wild Animal Park, shelling out \$664.95 for admission, \$163.88 for frozen yogurt and ice cream and \$8 to feed the animals. That night they spent \$291.50 for a meal at a Fuddruckers restaurant.

The following day, March 12, cultists went to Sea World, spending \$1,092 to enter and \$83.50 for refreshments. A day later, they went to the movies, spending \$258 for tickets and \$81 for popcorn.

The trips were listed inside a meticulous ledger that is part of the cult's possessions. It is now in the hands of the county Public Administrator/Guardian's Office, which is handling their estate.

The group seemed to be in vacation mode, traveling to Las Vegas in February and then embarking on a four-day bus tour starting March 5 through Gold Beach, Ore., an area popular among river rafters; then south to Ashland, Ore., known for its summer Shakespeare festival; and then continuing south with stops in Santa Rosa, a town north of San Francisco frequented by travelers looking for redwoods and geysers; and a stop near Magic Mountain in Santa Clarita to eat at a Burger King.

And even though they believed that they would be leaving this Earth to catch a spaceship to the "next level," they did not neglect household chores or maintenance tasks. They spent money for sprinkler and car repairs. They paid \$6,790 in rent.

The ledger also records the purchase of "uniforms" on March 13 for \$663. That probably refers to the cult's suicide clothes: black Nike sneakers, black pants and black shirts with triangular shoulder patches saying "Heaven's Gate Away Team." Then, on the 14th, someone bought \$15.71 worth of thread, according to the ledger.

For their last meals, cultists dined at the Red Oak Steakhouse in Encinitas on March 20 for \$549.90, and each person had "extra well-done tri-tip prepared in chili oil." The next night it was at Marie Callender's in Carlsbad, where each had a chicken pot pie. The tab was \$351.

The bodies were discovered five days later.

The most significant trip for authorities, however, may turn out to be a foray into Mexico, presumably Tijuana, on Feb. 26. The only entry in the log is for a \$6 parking fee, suggesting that the group left a vehicle on the U.S. side of the border and walked into Mexico, where phenobarbital can be purchased over the counter.

The cult members swallowed phenobarbital mixed with applesauce or pudding, then washed it down with alcohol and hastened their deaths by suffocating with plastic bags over their heads, the Medical Examiner's Office said.

Precedence: PRIORITY

Date: 04/07/1997

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

To: Laboratory WRCSC	Attn: IOSS, CART Unit Attn:	
From: San Diego North Co Contact Approved By: Drafted By:	Dunty RA SA 760-929-0811 b6 b7c	
Case ID #: Title: Heaven's G		
Mass Suic: March 26, AOT-DT-Vio	nta Fe, California, .de of 39 Indivuduals;	
Synopsis: Leads	o process data from Heaven's Gate computers.	
Administrative: Specialist (CS) 04/07/199	Reference telephone call of FBIHQ Computer b6 to San Diego SA b7C	
Division, IOSS, Caropy each of 30 pa	ing forwarded under separate cover to Laboratory ART Unit, are 29 magneto optical disks and one ages of accompanying notes. Forwarded SC are 81 floppy disks.	
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On 04/03	b6 b6	
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To: Laboratory om: San Diego
Re: 04/07/1997 b7E

LEAD (s):

Set Lead 1:

LABORATORY

AT WASHINGTON, DC

IOSS, CART Unit is requested to

b7E

Set Lead 2:

WRCSC

AT POCATELLO, ID

WRCSC is requested to dupe the 81 floppy disks and

b6 b7C b7E



U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Washington, D. C. 20535

March 28, 1997

Privacy Officer
Social Security Administration
6401 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, Maryland 21235

b6 b7C

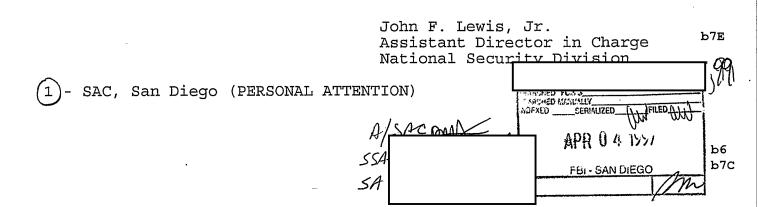
Dear

On March 26, 1997, thirty-nine bodies were located on an estate in Rancho Santa Fe, California. As news articles have disclosed, all individuals participated in a mass suicide relating to a cult known as "Heaven's Gate." Subsequent to discovery of these thirty-nine bodies by the San Diego Sheriff's Office, the San Diego County Medical Examiner's Office has attempted to identify the next of kin, and has been unsuccessful in doing so with fifteen decedents.

Each of the thirty-nine decedents had identification on their body to include such items as: individual's Social Security Account Number, driver's license, passport and date of birth. The identification of the next of kin of the above-noted fifteen individuals is essential to allow for appropriate notification.

It is requested that the Social Security Administration locate the Social Security Form SS5 pertaining to each of the fifteen listed individuals to assist in the identification of the next of kin. A listing of the decedents' names and corresponding identifications have been forwarded to the Social Security Administration by separate cover. Your assistance and cooperation in this matter is most appreciated.

Sincerely yours,



K)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Prece	der	ce:	PRIORITY			Date:	04/03/19	97
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Appro	ved	l By:				(
Draft	ed	By:						
Case	ID	#: [(Pendi	ag			b7E
Title	:		ENS GATE; COLINA NORTE,					

Synopsis: Heavens Gate cult group leader Applewhite's Houston-specific information summary.

Details: Re SD TT to Director and all offices, 3/28/1997.

RANCHO SANTA FE, CA

3/26/1997 AOT-DT-VC

MASS SUICIDE OF 39 INDIVIDUALS

From a review of Houston based news reports it is known that the mass suicide of 39 members of the Heavens Gate cult organization in Rancho Santa Fe, Ca. had several Texas connections, primary of which is Heavens Gate leader, Marshall Applewhite's past association in Houston, Texas. None of these past connections indicate a match to ongoing criminal activity within the Houston division. In addition, there are numerous ACS references to Marshall Applewhite in FBIHQ files, apparently pertaining to matters occurring during the early and mid 1970s. Applewhite is further identified as a white male; DOB 5/17/1931; POB Spur, Texas; SSAN 449-36-7015.

Marshall Herff Applewhite was a former Houston music teacher at the University of St. Thomas from 1966-1970. Applewhite, while residing in Houston, was a founder of the Houston Festival Chorus. Media reports indicate he displayed no unusual beliefs of tendencies (religious or otherwise) while employed at St. Thomas. Following receipt of "terminal leave" from the university in 1970, Applewhite studied music in New York for one year before returning to Houston and engaging in what was apparently his first foray into unusual religious practices.

rotur rec'al searched 04/10/97 -100

المنطبة الأموية

To: National Security From: Houston Re: 04/03/1997

b7E

Applewhite and astrologist Bonnie Lu Truesdale Nettles (an individual also with ACS references, some of which coincide with those of Applewhite) attempted to found the Christian Art Center, a religiocultural educational institute that would present material and courses on diverse religious, astrological, and theosophical issues. After a brief stint as music director at the First Unitarian Universalist Church in Houston, Applewhite left Houston in 1972.

Applewhite did have a criminal record containing two auto theft charges, one of which caused him to serve four months in a Missouri jail. He apparently evolved into cult leadership by virtues unknown as he did not carry an imperialistic of quasi-religious title, but was simply described by the Heavens Gate members as their "older member."

Ex-member: Other Gate cultists might try suicide

D. WADE BOOTH and TIMOTHY O'HARA

NORTH COUNTY TIMES

RANCHO SANTA FE — A Sheriff's Department document lends credence to reports that not all active Heaven's Gate cult members died in last week's mass suicide in a Rancho Santa Fe mansion.

Former members say there are more active cultists, and some may have left Rancho San-

ta Fe, perhaps at the urging of their leader, in the weeks just before the deaths. The 39 bodies were discovered March 26.

The number 39 was signifi-

> SUICIDE, A8

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A-1 North County Times Escondido, CA

Date: Edition:

Thursday, 4/3/97

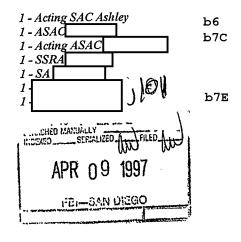
Title:

"Ex-member: Other Gate cultists might try suicide"

Character: or Classification:

Submitting Office

San Diego Indexing:



SUICIDE

Continued from A1

"(Cult leader Marshall Herff Applewhite) was really into numerology," former cult member Aaron Greenberg of Eugene, Ore., said Wednesday. "Nine plus 3 equals 12. (The number of Christ's apostles.) Everything meant something."

Greenberg suggested Apple-white may have purposely pared

home down to 39.

Sheriff's homicide officials say they are just beginning to pore inickname was "Rio" - report 45 through dozens of videotapes, personal journals and items confiscated from the rented estate." But they maintain there is no information to indicate any active members of the Heaven's Gate cult remain alive.

It was former member Richard B. Ford, 43, of Beverly Hills who notified authorities about the suicides the day after he received farewell videotapes and letters

from the group.

report that he expected to find home. 45 dead cult members — not 39 - when he entered the home.

"An anonymous person called stating that 45 people had com- phone calls from reporters. mitted suicide inside the resi-

Times on Wednesday.

Ford had left the cult about two months ago. His 1:20 p.m. call to authorities was placed from a Carlsbad pay phone and routed to the Sheriff's Department's dispatch center, sheriff's Cmdr. Alan Fulmer said.

Two hours later, a supervisor told Brunk to call the dispatch center on a telephone, not on his regular radio where the conversation could be monitored by scanners. This is when he was told to check the welfare of 45 people the number of members in the, who may have committed suicide

Why did Ford — whose cult

victims?

"Obviously he must have a reason," homicide Lt. Jerry Lipscomb said. "I don't know what that reason is."

Detectives have contacted other former members of the cult, and interviewed Ford several

times, Lipscomb said.

Ford also had called Beverly Hills police. But by the time a Beverly Hills police sergeant phoned sheriff's officials, Deputy Robert Brunk, the first * Deputies Brunk and Laura deputy at the scene, stated in his & Gacek were already inside the

> Ford, a computer programmer for Interact Entertainment Group, has not returned repeated

The cult of 21 female and 18 dence," Brunk wrote in a report obtained by the North County male Web-site designers believed they needed to shed their "hu-

man containers" to rendezvous with a spacecraft following the Hale-Bopp comet, according to the group's Internet writings. The spaceship would take them to the "Level Above Human."

Investigators are refusing to release taped copies of Ford's call to authorities. Nor will they release a group picture of the cult found inside the mansion, calling it and the tapes "evidence."

At the same time, though, offi-

cials say no crime has been com-

mitted.

Greenberg, the former cult member, said he personally knows of about 60 to 80 active Heaven's Gate cultists.

According to the group's Internet writings, the door to Heaven's Gate is still open, but only for a short time. Greenberg fears that some might try to enter it just like those in Rancho Santa Fe.

The Hale-Bopp comet will be visible at night for about another month. When it disappears, some members believe their chance to reach the next level will fly with it, said Greenberg, who was with the cult for six months in 1976. He still stays in close contact with some members of splinter groups that cling to the doctrine and teachings of the 65-year-old Applewhite, who died in the estate.

Greenberg said he spoke Monday by telephone with two members, one who is part of a 60member group in New York. The other belongs to a group of 40 believers in Canada.

"It's like Christianity," he said. "Over the years you have different sects and beliefs vary."

The members he spoke with talked about meeting this week at the "Four Corners," where the borders of Utah, Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico meet. He also said they talked of going to Cochise's Stronghold, named after the Apache chief, in the Dragoon Mountains of Coronado National Forest near Tucson, Ariz.

Authorities and residents in both those areas say they have seen no sign of Heavens' Gate

members.

'We're not interested in where the rest of the folks are gathering," Lipscomb said. Greenberg is concerned.

"A lot of these people are disconnected with the world. You have a bunch of vacuous people working \$7-an-hour, working \$7-an-hour, going-nowhere jobs," he said. "I don't want to read in the newspaper about another group of people taking their lives."

In the cult's farewell videos. Applewhite says into the camera, "(Ŷou) can follow us, but you can't stay here and follow us. ... Come join us. The time is now. The window is small."

"The call is out," Greenberg

Greenberg said he tried to contact the members on Tuesday, but they didn't answer their phones or return his calls.

Leader feared FBI stalking, man who left suicide cult says

Reuters

NEW YORK — A man who left the Heaven's Gate cult four weeks before 39 members killed themselves said the group's leader feared that the FBI was stalking the cult, Newsweek magazine reported Sunday.

Rio DiAngelo, 43, provided the details of the cult's last weeks in an eight-hour interview with the news weekly. Last week he signed a deal to provide material for a TV movie and also was scheduled to appear in an interview on ABC in the coming week to discuss the three years he spent in the group.

"He was very security-minded," DiAngelo said of the cult leader, Marshall Herff Applewhite, who was known to members as "Do." Applewhite often lived apart from the others and worried about the "vibrations" of new members, DiAngelo said.

DiAngelo, known as "Neody" inside the cult, said Applewhite became increasingly concerned after the government attack on the Branch Davidian sect near Waco, Texas, in April 1993. DiAngelo said fear of a similar fate may have been a reason for the Heaven's Gate members to "exit their vehicles."

"We didn't know if we were going to get caught by the FBI, or if there was going to be another Waco, or if somebody was going to shoot everybody or if everybody was going to have to do it themselves," he said.

DiAngelo said such fears are an explanation of why guns were found near the San Diego mansion where the group held its mass suicide last month. He said it also explained why the members had money in their pockets

By John McCutchen, San Diego Union-Tribune via AF



Applewhite: The Heaven's Gate leader's fear of a Waco-like clash with the FBI may have been a reason for the mass suicide discovered in Rancho Santa Fe, left

"We didn't know if we were going to get caught by the FBI, or if there was going to be another Waco, or if somebody was going to shoot everybody or if everybody was going to have to do it themselves."

- Rio DiAngelo, who left cult one month before suicides

when they died, because ever since a member had been questioned by police for vagrancy, Applewhite required them to also carry at least a \$5 bill.

DiAngelo, who had a troubled life that included a broken home and a divorce, left the cult with Applewhite's permission.

"I told him I felt I had something to do outside...like a task" after he had been offered a full-time job at InterAct Entertainment, a company that used the cult's Web-design outfit. A few weeks later DiAngelo received a Federal Express package containing the farewell video from members. He said he still considers himself a member of Heaven's Gate and is an "instrument of clarification" left behind to tell the cult's story.

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

7A USA Today Arlington, VA

Date: Edition:

Monday, 4/7/97

Title:

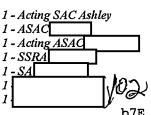
"Leader feared FBI stalking, man who left suicide cult says"

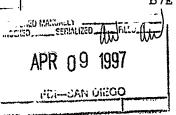
Character: or Classification:

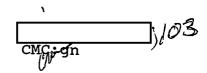
Submitting Office

San Diego Indexing:

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On March 28, 1997, SAC Bruce Gebhardt, Phoenix
Division, telephonically advised he had been contacted by an individual residing in the Glendale, Arizona, area who expressed concern that Glendale may have had some connection with the mass suicide in Rancho Santa Fe, California. SAC Gebhardt advised the Glendale resident was aware of a man named who installed a computer program called "Team Up" into their system. The resident believes and the "Team Up" program may be linked to the Heaven's Gate group in Rancho Santa Fe.

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SAC Gebhardt has asked that his office be advised of the names of the deceased once they have been identified.

April

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On 3/28/97, SAC BRUCE GEBHARDT, Phoenix Division,	
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Rancho Santa Fe. SAC GEBHARDT advised the Glendale resident was	b6
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called "TEAM-UP" into their system. The resident believes	
and the TEAM UP program may be linked to the HEAVEN'S GATE group	
in Santa Fe.	

SAC GEBHARDT has asked that his office be advised of the names of the deceased once they have been identified.

Sent y 197 Sustan

it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

- 1 -

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

5255 Mt. Etna Street, San Diego, California. provided access to several desktop and laptop computers selzed from the residence of, and a storage facility maintained by, the members of the Heaven's Gate cult, of Rancho Santa Fe, California. Backup copies of the computers' hard drives were made on 29 optical disks. Also on April 3, 1997, at the SDSO Homicide Detail offices at 5255 Mt. Etna Street, San Diego, SA obtained at 151 obtained be selzed the disks from SDSO Detective. The SDSO had selzed the disks from the Heaven's Gate residence in Rancho Santa Fe, California. SA conveyed the optical disks and the floppy disks to the Evidence Control Center of the San Diego office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.		Date of transcription	4/8/97	
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FAX TRANSMISSION



Office of the Legal Attache

American Embassy London, England

Telephone #: 011-44-171-408-8078

Fax #: 011-44-171-499-7944

Precedence: PRIORITY

To:

FBI SAN DIEGO

Date:

April 2, 1997

Fax #:

619-514-5991

Pages:

2, including this cover sheet.

Voice #:

619-565-1255

From:

Legat London

b6 b7C

Subject:

MASS SUICIDE OF CULT GROUP

Our Ref:

LO 163-0

COMMENTS:

In view of past patterns of similar activity by related groups, United Kingdom authorities are interested to know if there are any known U.K. connections.

Please pass to local authorities.

RESPONSE WHE

plene for 1/3/97

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Precedence:	PRIORITY	Date:	04/11/1997
To: San Diego Laborato:	o Attr		it
	or Case <u>Support Group</u> tact:	(208) 238-075	71
Approved By:	v cup l	Turke)	b6 b7c
Drafted By:	pah •	R	
Case ID #:	(Pending)	-106	b7E
18241 Ranch Mass : March AOT-D	N'S GATE, Colina Norte, o Santa Fe, California, Suicide of 39 Individual 26, 1997; T-Violent Crimes; minary Inquiry	ls;	
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Administrativ	e: San Diego, North Cour	nty RA EC dated 04	1/07/1997.
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Details: All	81 disks were duplicate	ed except	b7E

ADR 1 (C), b6 b7c

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Precedence: ROUTINE	Date:	04/11/1997	
To: San Diego			
From: Portland		ASCI	
Approved By:	DADED AC		1.6
Drafted By: 11c	NO AC	S > I	b6 b7C
Case ID #: (Pending)		4 14 C	b7E
Title: HEAVEN'S GATE, 18241 Colina Norte, Rancho Santa Fe, California; MASS SUICIDE OF 39 INDIVIDUALS 03/26/1997; AOT-DT; VC		4	
Synopsis: Lead covered.			
Reference: 4 107		ъ71	E
Enclosures: LHM re Heaven's Gate group and/or ass	sociat	es.	
Details: The enclosed LHM summarizes Portland Dithe group known as "HIM" in 1975 which has been dethe same as the captioned Heaven's Gate group. Ac information from the Portland file may be obtained as Portland Division, (503) 2 ext 645.	etermi dditic ed by	ned to be onal contacting	b6 b7C

SEARCHED FOIMS
SEARCHED MANUALTY
INDEXED____SFRIALIZED_____FILED______ APR 1 5 1997 FBI-SAN DIEGO

JORM T.415/97 (4) 1C 10/02 E47

b6

b7C

Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to File No.

Portland, Oregon 97201

April 7, 1997

Heaven's Gate, 18241 Colina Norte, Rancho Santa Fe, California;
Mass Suicide of Thirty Nine Individuals, March 26, 1997;
Acts of Terrorism-Domestic Terrorists-Violent Crimes;
Preliminary Inquiry;
OO: San Diego.

The UFO sect, also known as Human Individual Metamorphosis "HIM," came to Waldport, Oregon on 09/14/1975 for its only formal visit to the state. The group was led by Marshall Herff Applewhite DOB 05/17/1931 and Bonnie Lu Trousdale Nettles DOB 08/29/1927, also known as "HIM and HER," "Bo and Peep" and "Mr. and Mrs. Simon." Newspaper accounts from "The Oregonian" (local Portland daily) and "The Statesman" (local Salem daily newspaper) tracked the movements of the "UFO couple" around Oregon and other parts of the country.

The Portland Division sent and received teletypes between New Haven, Denver, Los Angeles and San Diego Divisions regarding the group during the period of October to November 1975. The teletypes dealt with particular individuals in the group as well as individuals who had joined HIM and had been reported missing by family members from around the country. No formal investigation was ever undertaken by Portland because no identifiable federal violation had occurred.

The group believed that perpetual life was attainable through the metamorphosis process similar to that of the butterfly. The couple set forth requirements for those wishing to participate: 1) No children under 12; 2) Immediate disposal of personal property; and 3) Metamorphosis will begin only after death. A group with similar beliefs to HIM was identified as the Universarian Foundation, 3620 SE 84th Ave., Portland, Oregon, (503) 775-2140.

The newspaper clippings, in addition to tracking HIM's movements around the country, also tracked the disappearance of up to twenty residents of Waldport who allegedly followed Applewhite and Nettles out of town after the 09/14/1975 HIM meeting. A lengthy article from Northwest Magazine (supplement to Sunday Oregonian daily newspaper) entitled "I Found the Missing People from Waldport" (11/02/1975) included much information regarding the group.

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

FBI

TRANSMIT VIA: X Teletype Facsimile AIRTEL	PRECEDENCE: Immediate Priority Routine	CLASSIFICATION: TOP SECRET SECRET CONFIDENTIAL UNCLAS E F T O UNCLAS	
		Date 4/9/97	
FM FBI SAN DIEGO	(P)		b7E
TO DIRECTOR FBI/ROU	rine/		
LEGAT LONDON/ROUTIN	E/		
вт			
UNCLAS	,		
CITE: //3780: SQ 4	//		
PASS: NSD FOR UNIT	CHIEF	; LONDON FOR LEGAT	ь6 ()
			b7C
CALIFORNIA; MASS SU 1997; ACTS OF TERRO PRELIMINARY INQUIRY	ICIDE OF THIRTY NI RISM-DOMESTIC TERF T LONDON FAX TRANS	NORTE, RANCHO SANTA FE, INE INDIVIDUALS, MARCH 26, RORISTS-VIOLENT CRIMES; SMISSION TO SAN DIEGO	
. 1 1	•	SEARCHED INDEXE SERRALIZED AND FILED.	in file bore
Approved: MDAJan		ame: <u>Ammoniw.099</u>	
Time Received:	-1.	name: <u>AMM8180.099</u>	
MACOUNTY DIVING	25/101	ISN: OOD PDR	
TOV TATE & TIME OF A	CCEDTANCE. 4.11.7	コノ ムのしく	

^PAGE 2 SD UNCLAS

REFERENCED FAX REQUESTED INFORMATION ON CAPTIONED GROUP,

INCLUDING ANY CONNECTIONS WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM, FOR

DISSEMINATION TO 57D

ON APRIL 8, 1997, DETECTIVE SAN DIEGO COUNTY b6

b7C

SHERIFF'S OFFICE (SDSO) ADVISED THAT SDSO HAS NO EVIDENCE OF
ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE HEAVENS GATE
CULT AND THE UNITED KINGDOM NOR IS THERE ANY EVIDENCE LINKING
HEAVENS GATE WITH ANY OTHER GROUP IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

THE GROUP'S LEADER, MARSHALL APPLEWHITE CLAIMED TO BE THE REINCARNATION OF CHRIST. THE HEAVENS GATE MEMBERS REFERRED TO THEMSELVES AS MONKS AND BELIEVED THAT THEIR SUICIDES WOULD RESULT IN THEIR SALVATION ABOARD A SPACESHIP TRAILING THE HALE BOPP COMET. THE CAUSE OF DEATH WAS A COMBINATION OF THE INGESTION OF APPLESAUCE OR PUDDING LACED WITH PHENOBARBITAL, WASHED DOWN WITH VODKA, AND ASPHYXIATION WITH PLASTIC BAGS.

SAN DIEGO WILL ADVISE LEGAT LONDON IF ANY CONNECTIONS TO THE UNITED KINGDOM DEVELOP.

BT

County employee learns from cult's possessions

TIMOTHY O'HARA

STAFF WRITER

SAN DIEGO — Since the discovery of the 39 bodies of Heaven's Gate cult members inside a plush Rancho Santa Fe estate, the world has struggled to understand their actions and religious beliefs.

Why kill yourself in hopes of catching a ride to the next level on a space-ship you believe is following the comet Hale-Bopp?

How does the drive to achieve a sexless, genderless commune lead eight cultists to have themselves castrated?

Since their bodies were discovered by a former member March 26, the cultists have been dubbed lunatics or brainwashed freaks, their beliefs so foreign they might as well have come from outer space.

But county Deputy Public Guardian Susan Jamme — in charge of inventorying items they left behind sees a "very normal" human side to those most of the world has written off

"These people were not crazy," she

➤ CULT, A5

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A I North County Times Escondido, CA

Date: Edition:

Monday, 4/7/97

Title:

"County employee learns from cult's possessions"

Character:

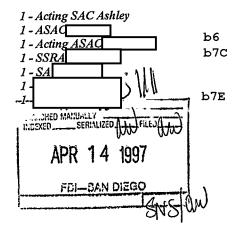
or

Classification:

Submitting Office

San Diego Indexing:





> CULT

Continued from A1

said, surrounded by pictures of aliens and other trinkets left behind by the cult. "It makes people feel better if they can label them as insane or say that they were brainwashed. No one wants to believe that normal, functioning adults could do this. People don't like it when all the blanks can't be filled in."

Outside of the former cult member who discovered the bodies and some sheriff's investigators, Jamme, who has worked as a public guardian for 12 years, has gotten closer to the cult than

anyone alive.

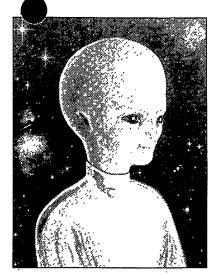
Jamme and two other county employees have bagged, tagged and boxed thousands of household items from the mansion, including cases of toothpaste, four gallons of Starbucks Java chip ice cream, frozen pizzas and shelves of videos and soda pop.

She also has pored through the group's small blue ledger, which meticulously documented all expenditures and debits. Cult members were so precise that they accounted for each penny. The final debit was for \$.06 and was marked in just days before they died. The ledger has become crucial in gaining insight into the group's structured lifestyle.

And structured it was. With the tallest toward the back, they sat at group meetings and watched television according to a seating chart. They were given haircuts at regimented times posted on a wallboard. But they were not frugal with their money.

'The self-described monks gambled in Las Vegas shortly before their deaths, gave out \$50 tips and would spend more than \$100 at Taco Bell and Burger King, according to the ledger.

"They were not a monastery in the traditional sense," Jamme said. "It was not about self-de-



This painting of an alien was recovered from the cult members' rented home.

nial, but about self-fulfillment."

While she doesn't agree with the group's philosophies or decision to commit suicide, she is not

quick to criticize.

"I see a lot of good qualities in them," she said. "They appeared to be considerate of each other. All of the organization was for a reason, a common good. I would not be surprised if someone was left-handed that they made sure that the knife and fork would be on the left side.

"We should be that considerate of our friends."

Media accounts have painted a scarier picture of the group than it deserves, she said.

"People ask me if I could live next door to them or if I could be friends with them," she said. "Why couldn't we be friends? If there was no requirement by them that I join their religion, I would have no problem being friends with them. I don't know if they would be friends with me, but why not?"

Many people have failed to see that the cult members had a sense of humor, Jamme said, holding up a T-shirt from the mansion that depicts a suitcasetoting, hitchhiking space alien above the caption, "FÅR-FROMHOME." The shirt is a takeoff on a Volkswagen marketing slogan.

It is not the cult's unorthodox religious views that bother Jamme, but members' lack of individuality.

"I wish I could find something that would show me that these people had their own identity," she said. "They thought the whole was greater than the sum of its parts."

Jamme is no stranger to handling bizarre cases, but admits this tops the list. In 1991, she was the public guardian in charge of handling the personal belongings of a man who turned out to

be on the FBI's 10 Most Wanted List. After collecting the belongings of the man, who died from a cerebral hemorrhage, a tipster in San Francisco contacted her and said the man wasn't going by his real name and was responsible for the deaths of others.

She called the FBI, which ran the man's fingerprints through its computer system. The prints matched those of Leo Koury, wanted back East for the killings of several gay men, she said.

"I thought that was my five minutes of fame," she said. "I guess I have been given someone else's five minutes."

The cult's belongings, stored at the Public Administrator's warehouse along Ruffin Road in San Diego, will be sold at one of the county's most eagerly awaited public auctions.

"We have already received several phone calls from people asking when the auction will be," she said. "I imagine that some of this stuff will go for a pretty penny."

It is unclear when the auction will be held.

V

Special Report: Mass Suicide

Cops: Firm could be cashing in on suicides

ANGELA GEISER and TIMOTHY O'HARA

STAFF WRITERS

Authorities are investigating whether a Temecula business is fraudulently cashing in on the Heaven's Gate mass suicide, authorities said Wednesday.

Resources International Inc. is circulating messages on the Internet asking people to send \$24.90 for a report on the cult and a copy of the San Diego

County Sheriff's Department report on the suicides. The message asks patrons to e-mail or fax their credit card numbers and expiration dates, or to send checks or money orders to a Temecula address.

But sheriff's officials say there's no way the firm could have a copy of the report because investigators haven't written it yet. Postal Service and lo-

➤ SUICIDES, A7

Indicate page, newspaper, city, state

A-I North County Times Escondido, CA

Date: Edition:

Thursday, 4/10/97

Title:

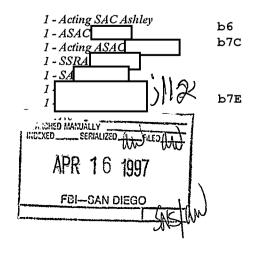
"Cops: Firm could be cashing in on suicides"

Character:
or
Classification:

Submitting Office

San Diego Indexing:





➤ SUICIDES

Continued from A1

cal authorities say other details about the business and its prod-

uct are suspicious.

"We're investigating it, though I would hesitate to call it fraud at this point," Temecula police Lt. Jim Domenoe said. "They might have a legitimate product. We just don't know.

"But I would not encourage anyone to send in money without researching whether it's legiti-

mate."

The FBI also plans to look into it, spokesman Keith Moses said from San Diego. Among the documents Research International is offering is "Excerpts from the FBI files on the Heaven's Gate cult."

FBI spokesman Al Tribble in Washington, D.C., declined to comment about whether an FBI file even exists. The agency is assisting the Sheriff's Department in reviewing computer files found in the cult's rented Rancho Santa Fe estate.

The bodies of the 39 cult members were found March 26, days after they ingested a mixture of phenobarbital-laced pudding and vodka, and asphyxiated them-

selves with plastic bags.

In writings left behind on the Internet, members of the cult of Web-page designers said they believed their souls would ascend to the "Level Above Human" on a spaceship trailing the Hale-Bopp comet.

Resource International's email states it is an independent research firm that has obtained profiles on living and deceased cult members as well as "catalogued information" on the cult's daily routines, recruitment practices, social structure, castrations and finances. But Resources International has not filed a Temecula business license or a Riverside County fictitious business statement, officials said.

The Jefferson Avenue address given by the business is for Mail Mart, which rents postal boxes to customers. Mail Mart owner David Nasby said none of his boxes is rented to a Resources International. If any mail came addressed to that name, Mail Mart

would refuse it, he said.

San Diego postal inspector David Fast said it is a common ruse for fraudulent businesses to rent a postal box. It gives them an address and suite number and thus an air of legitimacy.

Fast said customers "in a hurry to get the information would probably just fax in their credit card numbers" and might never check on the business. The credit card could be charged and used for other purchases, he said.

San Diego County Sheriff's Lt. Jerry Lipscomb said the notes of some 15 investigators on the case "haven't yet been reduced to paper" or compiled in a report.

The final report will be placed in a confidential file and all rough drafts will be shredded, Lipscomb said. There is no way for anyone to get a copy of a final report "unless they steal it." Several messages left for Resources International at its advertised phone number and e-mail address were not returned.

Lipscomb has said others are trying to profit off what's been called the largest mass suicide on U.S. soil. Aspiring writers have tried to evoke murder-suicide theories from him, to no avail.

The former cult member who discovered the bodies after receiving a farewell package is also likely to make money. Richard Ford, 43, of Beverly Hills is working with ABC on a TV movie.

Ford is refusing to hand over a 2-minute videotape he shot inside the 18241 Colina Norte mansion when he found the bodies. Lipscomb said he's working with the District Attorney's Office to get a search warrant.

Ford's attorney, Robert Zakari, said the night the bodies were discovered sheriff's detectives interviewed Ford at the Beverly Hills Police Station. Ford gave them the tapes in the farewell package and was fingerprinted. Detectives took fibers from his clothes to make sure he was not in the home when cult members killed themselves, Zakari said.

Zakari said his client might turn over the tape if a "compromise" can be reached with the Sheriff's Department. A 10-second portion was given to CNN.

Zakari said Ford shot the tape to make sure "the press reported it honestly."

Staff Writers J.E. Mitchell and D. Wade Booth contributed to this report.

•		
	Precedence: ROUTINE Date: 04/10/1997	
	To: San Diego WFO - North Virginia RA Attn: SSA Squad C-17 (202) 324-6121	
	From: Charlotte Raleigh RA Contact: SA (919) 836-2570	
	Approved By: WS	ь6 ь7с
	Drafted By: dep	
	Case ID #: (Pending)	b7E
	Title: HEAVEN'S GATE, 18241 Colina Norte, Rancho Sante Fe, California; MASS SUICIDE OF 39 INDIVIDUALS, 03/26/97; ACTS OF TERRORISM - DOMESTIC TERRORISTS - VIOLENT CRIMES; PRELIMINARY INQUIRY	Ì
	Administrative: Reference WFO URGENT facsimile dated March 30, 1997 to SA Raleigh RA from SA CITAC, WFO, and telephone calls between SA and SA Raleigh RA dated March 30, 1997 and April 2, 1997.	ь6 ь70
	Details: For information of San Diego, on March 30, 1997, CITAC, WFO discovered a page on the internet alleging the intentions of a group of people in North Carolina sharing the views of those who recently died in San Diego, who intend to do the same thing on March 31, 1997. A portion of it read "North Carolina connection to join brothers in space: the hysteria following the "deaths" of the angels in California will eventually pass. We shall too. It's now our turn to leave this earth for their kingdom. March 31, 1997."	
	Additional information was obtained by CITAC through tracings.	
	of birth social security number date of birth social security number , was contacted at her place of residence,	b6 b7С
n	100 dep 03. lc Ral WPS1 Rb 4-18-97 & (4)	ь6 ь7с
Kotor	16 4-18-97 JC (4)	

To: San Diego From: Charlotte Re: 04/10/1997	b7E
and advised of the identities of SA and SA Raleigh RA, Charlotte Office. During the discussion that followed. advised she is employed as a She has an e-mail address or account and an e-mail address or account and faculty members have internet access provided by the university.	b6 b7С
telephone number buys and sells internet domains which he lists with a broker in New York called Globe.Con. works out of his residence.	b6 b7С
Sometime last week, sent a message to about Heaven's Gate. told her it was a joke, and wanted to know if he sent it, would anyone notice. told him not to send it out, that it was in poor taste. The Heaven's Gate propaganda was sent by e-mail to her account was confident it was meant as a joke and that say was not associated in any way with a cult or a religious group.	ь6 ь7с
On March 31, 1997, birth telephone number , was contacted by SA advised he has his own business, is not incorporated. This business is operated out of his residence. business concerns brokering domains with a business name of Smartdomains. He sells "names" for websites for people and companies needing names for their internet websites.	Ь6 Ь7С
Several days ago, he learned through the media about the suicide of many members of Heaven's Gate in California. He was intrigued by the death of the cult members, and sought information on the internet about the group. He discovered the website for Heaven's Gate and e-mail address. He attempted to make contact utilizing the e-mail address, seeking information about the cult or group. The response he received in return was as if the e-mail address had been closed. thought Heaven's Gate would be of interest to the general public, to	ь6 ь7С

To: San Diego From: Charlotte Re: 04/10/1997	b7E
obtain from the public their opinions on the matter of the cult or group Heaven's Gate. He informed his parents what he had in mind concerning the obtaining of public opinion prior to actually creating a page in his website, Smartdomains.	
He then added to his own web page, Smartdomains, by cutting and pasting or copying a "mirror" image of the web page of the original Heaven's Gate in California. He then added on to his e-mail address to include Heaven's Gate information which could be located on internet website address of advised that rocketmail provides free e-mail, plus a website is automatically set up for the user at no charge.	ь6 ь7С
then e-mailed messages to about four of his friends including telephone number Her e-mail address or account is He asked them to check out a website page he had created, web address	ь6 ь7С
could not believe the number of "hits" or contacts that has occurred over the days following the creation of a page on his website titled Heaven's Gate. There were more than 7000 hits or contacts where people had contacted his site and page on the internet for Heaven's Gate. There were thirty to forty hostile e-mail messages left for him by the general public regarding their personal feelings of Heaven's Gate.	b6 b70
realized it was in poor taste and just bad judgment on his part to create a mirror image of what the original Heaven's Gate website displayed. He added other words to it as a joke, and wished he had not added anything to it, but to include an excerpt with something to the effect that this page is not related to Heaven's Gate or any cult and that this website condemned the mass suicide in California, that the only purpose this page was created for was to gather public opinion regarding the suicide.	b6 b7С
According to	b6 b7С

San Diego From: Charlotte Re: 04/10/1997 b7E mentioned by her the FBI would be contacting him and for him not to destroy or delete any information from his web page, that the b6 FBI would like to see it. had been considering removing the Heaven's Gate propaganda for a while all along since he had __had been considering removing b7C been receiving hostile e-mail messages from people about his website page. So after he received her call, he decided to delete the page from his website and also to delete the free e-mail address from rocketmail. placed a few lines into his web page 9 after **b6** deleting the information pertaining to Heaven's Gate just in case b7C there were additional contacts or hits by internet users. lines are as follows: Ignore any message you read here earlier. This page is not related to Heaven's Gate or any cult. We condemn the mass suicide in California. The purpose of this page was to gather public opinion on this tragic event. admitted he showed very poor judgement by not b6 placing a warning of some type before his web page of Heaven's b7C Gate. He showed worst judgement by adding the following phrases which he himself made up as a joke: "Higher Power Planet, California United States of America e-mail address: **b6** b7C A level above human is our goal. The mother ship is our means. The last day. March 31, 1997 Favorite websites: Heaven's Gates Art Bell Talk Show The Last Day The Dilbert Zone

San Diego From: Charlotte Re: 04/10/1997 b7E UFO Warning: We will not return to our human containers March 22, 1997. North Carolina connection to join brothers in space: the hysteria following the "deaths" of the angels in California will eventually pass. We shall too. It's now our turn to leave this earth for their kingdom. March 31, 1997." According to the above mentioned Art Bell Talk Show, The Last Day, and The Dilbert Zone are not related to Heaven's Gate in any way and were just listed by him as they really are, favorite websites. **b**6 b7C According to the following propaganda of Heaven's Gate was cut and pasted or copied to his web page Smartdomains from the website of Heaven's Gate in California. "Whether Hale-Bopp has a "companion" or not is irrelevant from our perspective. However, it's arrival is joyously very significant at "Heaven's Gate." The joy is that our older member in the evolutionary level above human (the "kingdom of heaven") has made it clear to us that Hale-Bopp's approach is the "marker" we've been waiting for -- the time for the arrival of the space craft from the level above human to take us home to "their world" -- in the literal heavens. Our twentytwo years of classroom here on planet earth is finally coming to a conclusion -- "graduation" from the human evolutionary level. We are happily prepared to leave "this world" and go with Ti's crew. If you study the material on this website, you will hopefully understand our joy and what our purpose here on earth has been. You may even find your "boarding pass" to leave with us during this brief "window." We are so very thankful that we have been recipients of this opportunity to prepare for membership in their kingdom, and to experience their boundless caring and nurturing." appeared apologetic and offered any assistance he could regarding the investigation of the mass suicide.

would come up on many news media sites, there are others as well.

even went through the internet during the interview with the contacting Special Agent to show he was not the only individual on the internet who had "something" on a website page regarding Heaven's Gate. Although it was known the name Heaven's Gate

A total of 976 sites were listed indicating "something"

pertaining to Heaven's Gate.

b6

b7C

To: San Diego From: Charlotte Re: , 04/10/1997

b7E

No additional investigation being conducted within the Charlotte office at this time.

**



Precedence:	ROUTINE	Date:	04/21/1997	
To: San Dieg	0			
	7, NVRA tact:			
Approved By:			•	b6
Drafted By: [_b7C
Case ID #:	(Pending) 39		•	b7E
Title: HEAVE AOT-I	NS GATE; DT-VC			
Synopsis: The Computer Crime	e results of investigation conducte e Squad are provided below.	ed by WF	'O's	
Reference: To on 3/31/97.	elcall between SSA, WFO, and S	SA	SD,	b6 b7С
the San France who ace to inversely site, Rocket I seemed to index a mass suicide Diego area. posted by some	isco Division's computer crime squa dvised he had been contacted by San vestigate a message left at an anon	d SSA,[Diego Lymous r his mes were co lier in	remailer sage sasidering the San ad been	ъ6 ъ7С
system administration into Duke's system message had and was employ	SSA advise and he thereafter conducted appropystem from his home. Later the same ad been sent from the account of Duke's records, was yed by	d d riate i	sitv's . of	b6 ъ7с
		SERIALIZED	FILED AW] 114] b7E
		AP	R 2 1 1997	
		FBI - WAS	4: MHINN HILL OFFIC	

To: San Diego From: WFO Re: b7E <u>home</u> address as b6 phone b7C DOB of and a SSAN During the evening of 3/30/97, SSA relayed the above information to the Relief SSRA of the Raleigh-Durham b6 Resident Agency, Charlotte Division, SA b7C advised he would contact later that evening and follow through as appropriate. The <u>following</u> morning, 3/31/97, SA contacted SSA to advise ___stated she knew of the message and had instructed the writer of the message, not to post the message. advised she believed the message was a hoax. b7C That same morning, WFO checked the Web site where the original message had been posted and the message had been replaced with the following statement: "IGNORE ANY MESSAGE YOU READ HERE

THIS PAGE IS NOT RELATED TO HEAVEN'S GATE OR ANY CULT!

Based upon the above information, WFO considers this matter RUC'd.

WE CONDEMN THE MASS SUICIDE IN CALIFORNIA. THE ONLY PURPOSE OF THIS PAGE WAS TO GATHER PUBLIC OPINION ON THIS TRAGIC EVENT." A

EARLIER.

copy of the Web page is attached.

Precedence:	PRIORITY		Date	:	04/23/1997	
To: San Dieg Laborato	,		SA IOSS <u>, CART U</u> CS	'nit		
	or Case <u>Support Grou</u>		(208) 238-0	771		1.0
Approved By:	il t	Vaplw [*]				b6 b7С
Drafted By	jah	1				
Case ID #:	(Pendi 3	.ng)-116				b7E
18241 Ranch Mass March AOT-I	EN'S GATE, Colina Norte, O Santa Fe, Californ Suicide of 39 Indivi 1 26, 1997; DT-Violent Crimes; minary Inquiry					
	eturn of search resul North County Reside			of	diskettes	
	re: Reference San Di n of 04/07/1997.	.ego, No	rth County R	A ∈	electronic	
Package Copy: North County	Being <u>forwarded un</u> RA, are		arate cover Forwarded se			b7E b6
CS electronic co	at IOSS, CART					b7C
	the request of SA pecialists (TIS),		Tec	hni	.cal	b6
attached FD-3	02 detailing the pro	TIS	has pr			b70 b7E
searches.					****	
If <u>contact e</u> ithe	you have any questio	ns rega	rding this w	ork	please	b6
			,	i		

Date of transcription $04/22/97$	
The Pocatello Information Technology Center (PITC) was asked by the San Diego Field Office, North County Resident Agency, to review diskettes retrieved from the Heaven's Gate residence in Rancho Santa Fe, California. On April 9, 1997, PITC received from the North County Resident Agency, three containers of original evidence in the form of eighty-one (81) 3.5" computer diskettes. The diskettes were given to Technical Information Specialists (TIS) , who took custody of the storage media for the purposes of inventory and review.	b6 b7
All diskettes were left in the original containers as received. They were write protected and externally labeled. Copies were made of all original diskettes and originals were returned to the North County Resident Agency on April 15, 1997.	
TIS and TIS were instructed to search for	b7 b6 b7
	b
	b
	b
igation on 04/09-22/97 at Pocatello, Idaho Date dictated 04/22/97	

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

b7E DISKS OF HEAVEN'S GATE SUICIDE VICTIMS 04/09-22/97, Page Continuation of FD-302 of Information was retrieved from b6 b7C b7E were then saved on diskettes, and printed in hard copy form. b7E were saved on diskettes, and the files were all printed out in hard copy form. Information was retrieved from the following diskettes: Q00001 Q00002 Q00003 Q00004 Q00005 Q00006 Q00009 Q00007 Q00010 Q00011 Q00012 Q00014 Q00019 Q00018 Q00020 Q00021 Q00023 Q00022 Q00025 Q00026 Q00027 Q00028 Q00029 Q00030 Q00031 Q00032 Q00033 Q00034

Q00039

Q00038

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			b7E
Continuation of FD-302 of	DISKS OF HEAVE	EN'S GATE SUICIDE VICTIMS 04/09-22/97.	age3
	Q00040	Q00041	
	Q00043	Q00044	
	Q00045	Q00047	
	Q00048	Q00049	
	000058	000061	

- 1 -

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

			Date of transcription	9/18/97	
Specimen	Specimens:				
Q1					
Q2					
Q3					
Q4					
Q5					
Q6					
Q7					
Q8					
Q9					
Q10					
Q11					b'
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Q13					
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Q15					
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Q17					
Q18					
Q19					
Q20					
tigation on	3/11/97 at FBIF	IQ			
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This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

Continuation of FD-302 of	 , On	, Page
Q21		
Q22		
Q23		
Q24		
Q25		b7E
Q26		
Q27		
Q28		
Q29		

The results of the Computer Analysis Response Team (CART) computer media examination are included in this report.

Specimens Q1-Q29 were examined at CART, FBIHQ and were forwarded to FBI San Diego along with hardcopy printouts and report media under separate cover via overnight express delivery. No duplicate disk copies or printouts are being retained by FBIHQ, CART.

Precedence: ROUTINE	Date:	10/23/1997	
To: Criminal Investigative National Security			
From: San Diego North County RA Contact: SA (760)	929-0811		
Approved By:			b6
Drafted By: jhg			ь7С
Case ID #: (Closed)			b7E
Title: HEAVEN'S GATE, 18241 Colina Norte, Rancho Santa Fe, California; Mass Suicide of 39 Individuals; March 26, 1997; AOT-DT-VC; PI			(\
Synopsis: Closing communication.			(
Administrative: Reference San Diego teletype 03/27/1997 and 03/28/1997.	s to FBIH	IQ of	
Details: Per referenced teletypes, San Diego assistance to the San Diego County Sheriff's investigating captioned matter. SDSO request next of kin of several of the decedents. San assistance immediately following the incident requested assistance in processing the hard dicomputers belonging to captioned group. CART Angeles and San Francisco Divisions and a Comfrom FBIHQ downloaded the entire contents of drives onto 29 optical disks. In addition, 8 sent to the Western Regional Computer Support Pocatello, Idaho.	Office () ted help Diego pr . SDSO a rives of agents f puter Spe the cult; 1 floppy	SDSO) in in locating covided such also several from Los ecialist s hard disks were	
Processing of all Heaven's Gate comp	uter dat	a has now	1
been completed. The results have	e been pr	covided to	i 1
SDSO.			Ь _{67Е}
With no further investigation remains considers this matter closed.	_	n Diego	<u>-</u> A

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То:	SAC, SAN DIEGO	Date: November 15, 1999	
·		Case ID No.: ————————————————————————————————————	b7E
Reference:	Communication Dated April 7, 1997		
Your No.: Title:	Heaven's Gate 18241 Colina Norte, Rancho Santa Fe, California, Mass Suicide of 39 Individuals; March 26, 1997; AOT-DT-Violent Crimes; Preliminary Inquiry		
Date specim	ens received: April 9, 1997		
Specime	-		
Q1-Q3	Three (3) 1.2Gb 5.25" Magneto Optical Disk	S.	
Q4-Q29	Twenty-Six (26) 2.3Gb 5.25" Magneto Option	al Disks.	
specime Division returned	As per conversation between CS 11, 1997, the requested examinations are being on the second of the Evidence Control to be picked up by CS for further examination to the Evidence Control Technician of the San Tracking #: 4220 6250 9336 on September 11,	l Technician, San Diego Field ination. Specimens Q1-Q29 were Diego Field Division via Federal	b6 ъ7С
CS 6250 933 CS	Two (2) Jaz disks, one (1) CD and nine (9) point of the San Diego Field Division via Footnote and 4257 0464 5685 on September 11, 1997 was to continue further examination of the specific continue furth	ederal Express Tracking #s: 4220 and October 21, 1997 respectively.	b6 b7С

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121 PLE (76 contact CS and make the determination to what extent these materials require entry into the ACS Collected Item database.

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FM FBI SAN DIEGO (P)

TO DIRECTOR FBI/IMMEDIATE/

INFO ALL FBI FIELD OFFICES/IMMEDIATE/

BT

UNCLAS

CITE: //3780: SQ 4//

PASS: NSD FOR SECTION CHIEF ROBERT BLITZER; CID FOR VCMO AND

SIOC; TD FOR CIRG, SSA PROFILING AND BEHAVIORAL

ASSESSMENT UNIT.

SUBJECT: HEAVENS GATE, 18241 COLINA NORTE, RANCHO SANTA FE, CALIFORNIA; MASS SUICIDE OF THIRTY NINE INDIVIDUALS, MARCH 26, 1997; ACTS OF TERRORISM-DOMESTIC TERRORISTS-VIOLENT CRIMES; PRELIMINARY INQUIRY; OO: SAN DIEGO.

REFERENCE SAN DIEGO ACTING SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE GRANT
D. ASHLEY'S TEL CALL TO SIOC, MARCH 26, 1997.

Routed to 19. 5095

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SAN DIEGO HAS INITIATED A PRELIMINARY INQUIRY INTO
CAPTIONED MATTER SINCE IT CONCERNS ADVOCACY OF THE TAKING OF
HUMAN LIFE, THE PROVEN ABILITY TO EFFECT SUICIDE ON A LARGE
SCALE, AND POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF MASS SUICIDES IN OTHER
LOCATIONS.

AT 1:30 P.M., MARCH 26, 1997, THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY

SHERIFFS OFFICE (SDSO) RECEIVED AN ANONYMOUS CALL REQUESTING

A CHECK OF THE OCCUPANTS WELFARE AT 18241 COLINA NORTE,

RANCHO SANTA FE, CALIFORNIA. SDSO DEPUTIES RESPONDED AT 3:30

P.M. AND DISCOVERED THIRTY NINE DEAD BODIES IN VARIOUS ROOMS

OF THE RESIDENCE. THERE WERE NO SIGNS OF TRAUMA OR FORCED

ENTRY. SEVERAL AIR PURIFIERS WERE OPERATING IN THE HOUSE. THE

BODIES WERE FOUND LYING FACE UP ON MATTRESSES AND COTS

THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE, INCLUDING IN EACH OF THE SEVEN BEDROOMS.

EACH BODY WAS CLAD IN NEW BLACK NIKE TENNIS SHOES AND BLACK

PANTS. EACH DECEDENTS SHIRT HAD A TRIANGULAR PATCH ON THE

LEFT SHOULDER BEARING THE INSCRIPTION, HEAVENS GATE AWAY

TEAM. ALL BODIES HAD SHORT HAIR AND A GOLD BAND ON THE LEFT

RING FINGER. EACH BODY WAS ACCOMPANIED BY A PASSPORT.

SDSO HAS IDENTIFIED ALL DECEDENTS WHO APPEAR TO BE FROM THE SOUTHWEST AREA OF THE UNITED STATES.

THIRTY SEVEN BODIES WERE PARTIALLY DRAPED WITH TRIANGULAR PIECES OF PURPLE CLOTH. THE TOP POINT OF THE TRIANGLE COVERED THE HEAD OF EACH BODY, WITH THE OTHER TWO POINTS EXTENDING COVERAGE FROM SHOULDER TO SHOULDER. THE ARMS OF THESE CORPSES LAY BY THEIR SIDES AND EACH BODY HAD AN INDIVIDUAL, SMALL TOTE BAG ALONGSIDE, CONTAINING VARIOUS PERSONAL ITEMS. TWO FEMALE BODIES HAD PLASTIC BAGS COVERING THEIR HEADS, WITH THEIR HANDS CLUTCHING THE BOTTOM OF THE BAGS.

SEVERAL CUPS CONTAINING AN ORANGE LIQUID AND SEVERAL

MEDICINE BOTTLES WITH LABELS PARTIALLY REMOVED WERE DISCOVERED

IN THE NORTHWEST BEDROOM OF THE HOUSE. SDSO HOMICIDE SERGEANT

ADVISED THAT THE ORANGE LIQUID HAS PRELIMINARILY

INVESTIGATION DETERMINED THE GROUP WAS CALLED HEAVENS

GATE AND FORMERLY WENT BY THE NAME UFO GROUP.

ADVISED THEY PROBABLY DIED OF AN OVERDOSE OF BARBITURATES.

TESTED POSITIVE FOR VICODIN. A FORMER MEMBER OF THE GROUP

THE THIRTY NINE DEATHS APPEARED TO HAVE OCCURRED OVER AN SEVERAL DAYS. SDSO HOMICIDE HAS SPECULATED THAT THE TWO FEMALES WHOSE HEADS WERE COVERED IN PLASTIC BAGS WERE THE LAST TO DIE, AFTER THEY PLACED THE PURPLE SHROUDS ON THE OTHER

ь6 ь7с PAGE FOUR DE FBISD 0002 UNLAS BODIES.

SDSO RECOVERED NUMEROUS LETTERS, VIDEOS, PAMPHLETS AND PHOTOS THAT INDICATE THE GROUP PLANNED AN EXIT FROM THIS LIFE TO ANOTHER EXISTENCE. THESE MATERIALS ALSO DISCLOSED THE GROUPS BELIEF THAT THE HUMAN BODY IS A SHELL AND, AT SOME POINT IN LIFE, EVERYONE MUST DECIDE TO MOVE TO A HIGHER PLANE, TO TRANSITION TO A HIGHER LEVEL OF EXISTENCE.

SEVERAL COMPUTERS WERE INSIDE THE RESIDENCE, INCLUDING ONE WHICH BORE THE FOLLOWING SCREEN SAVER FEATURE, RED ALERT HALE BOPP HEAVENS GATE. UNCONFIRMED REPORTS INDICATE THE GROUPS MOST RECENT WEB SITE WAS, HTTP://WWW.NEW HORIZON.COM

ON THE EVENING OF MARCH 26, 1997, SDSO HOMICIDE

INTERVIEWED THE CALLER WHO HAD REQUESTED THE WELFARE CHECK AT

18241 COLINA NORTE. THAT INDIVIDUAL, A FORMER MEMBER OF

HEAVENS GATE, ADVISED THAT HE RECEIVED A LETTER AND A VIDEO

FROM GROUP MEMBERS AT HIS HOME IN THE LOS ANGELES AREA ON

MARCH 25, 1997. IN THE VIDEO, SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE GROUP

WERE RECORDED SAYING GOODBYE. SDSO HAS ALSO LEARNED THAT

VIDEOS/LETTERS WERE SENT BY HEAVENS GATE MEMBERS TO OTHER

RECIPIENTS VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE UNITED

STATES.

SDSO SERGEANT ADVISED THAT, TO DATE, HE HAS NO	b6 b7C
EVIDENCE TO INDICATE THAT HEAVENS GATE IS AFFILIATED WITH ANY	
OTHER CULT, SECT OR ORGANIZATION. CHECKS OF SAN DIEGO INDICES	
AND AUTOMATED CASE SYSTEMS UNIVERSAL NAME INDEX FOR HEAVENS	
GATE WERE NEGATIVE.	
SAN DIEGO ACTING SAC GRANT D. ASHLEY HAS SPOKEN WITH SDSO	
UNDERSHERIFF AND HAS OFFERED THE SERVICES OF THE	b6 b7C
FBI, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, CONDUCTING INDICES AND	
IDENTIFICATION CHECKS, PROVIDING FORENSIC ASSISTANCE,	
CONDUCTING INTERNATIONAL LEADS, PROVIDING THE SERVICES OF THE	
COMPUTER ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE TEAM, AND PROVIDING ASSISTANCE	
FROM THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE UNIT AT QUANTICO.	
FOR INFO OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE UNIT, THE SDSO CONTACT FOR	
CULT INVESTIGATIONS IS DETECTIVE, CRIMINAL	
INTELLIGENCE DETAIL,	b6 b7C
SAN DIEGO WILL ADVISE FBIHQ OF THE IDENTITIES OF THE	
DECEASED AND ANY FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.	
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FM FBI SAN DIEGO (P)

TO DIRECTOR FBI/IMMEDIATE/

ALL FBI FIELD OFFICES/IMMEDIATE/

BTITC/IMMEDIATE/

BT

UNCLAS

CITE: //3780:SO4//

PASS: NSD FOR UNIT CHIEF CID FOR VCMO AND SIOC;

PROFILING AND BEHAVIORAL TD FOR CIRG, SSA

ASSESSMENT UNIT; BALTIMORE FOR SA CALVERTON

RESIDENT AGENCY.

SUBJECT: HEAVENS GATE, 18241 COLINA NORTE, RANCHO SANTA FE, CALIFORNIA; MASS SUICIDE OF THIRTY NINE INDIVIDUALS, MARCH 26, 1997; ACTS OF TERRORISM-DOMESTIC TERRORISTS-VIOLENT CRIMES; PRELIMINARY INQUIRY; OO: SAN DIEGO.

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REFERENCE SAN DIEGO TELETYPE TO THE DIRECTOR DATED MARCH	
27, 1997 AND SAN DIEGO SSRA TEL CALL TO UNIT	
CHIEF NSD MARCH 28, 1997 AND TEL CALL TO SA	ь6 ь7с
BALTIMORE, CALVERTON RESIDENT AGENCY ON MARCH 28,	
1997.	
REFERENCED TELETYPE PROVIDED INFORMATION THAT SAN DIEGO	
HAD INITIATED A PRELIMINARY INQUIRY INTO CAPTIONED MATTER AND	
HAD OFFERED FBI ASSISTANCE TO THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S	
OFFICE IN THE INVESTIGATION OF THIS MATTER.	
ON MARCH 28, 1997, UNDERSHERIFF SAN DIEGO	b6 b7C
COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, CONTACTED ACTING SAC GRANT D. ASHLEY	
AND REQUESTED ASSISTANCE IN IDENTIFYING AND LOCATING THE NEXT	
OF KIN OF FIFTEEN OF THE DECEASED.	
FURTHER CONTACT WITH DOCTOR SAN DIEGO	b6
COUNTY DETERMINED THAT ALTHOUGH THE	ь7с
DECEASED BODIES CONTAINED VARIOUS FORMS OF IDENTIFICATION TO	
INCLUDE DRIVER LICENSES, SOCIAL SECURITY ACCOUNT NUMBERS,	
DATES OF BIRTH, PASSPORTS; ETC., THE MEDICAL EXAMINER HAS NO	
WAY OF DETERMINING THE NEXT OF KIN. DOCTOR	b6 b70
ADVISED THAT THROUGH THE RECEIPT OF NUMEROUS TELEPHONE CALLS	טום

THE NEXT OF KIN OF ALL THE DECEASED HAD BEEN NOTIFIED EXCEPT



FOR F	'IFTE	EN.	DOCT	or			REQU	JESTED	FBI	ASSIS	TANCE	IN
LOCAT	'ING	THE	NEXT	OF	$_{ m KIN}$	THROUGH	\mathtt{THE}	IDENTI	FICE	MOITA	PROVII	ED.

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IT IS REQUESTED THAT FBIHQ, THROUGH ESTABLISHED SOURCES, PARTICULARLY BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT, SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION, IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE, U.S. CUSTOMS SERVICE, OBTAIN AND REVIEW ANY INFORMATION THAT MAY LEAD TO THE IDENTITY OF RELATIVES OF THE DECEASED. BALTIMORE IS REQUESTED TO MAKE APPROPRIATE CONTACT WITH THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION IN ORDER THAT SOCIAL SECURITY FORM SS5 CAN BE REVIEWED FOR INFORMATION WHICH MAY LEAD TO THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE NEXT OF KIN. THE BUTTE TECHNOLOGY CENTER IS REQUESTED TO CONDUCT RECORD CHECKS ON THE DECEASED WITH AN EFFORT TOWARD DETERMINING ANY INFORMATION THAT MAY LEAD TO A RELATIVE. ITEMS OF PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION WILL BE FAXED UNDER SEPARATE COVER TO NSD, BALTIMORE, AND THE BUTTE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CENTER.

FOR INFORMATION OF RECEIVING OFFICES, ANY INQUIRIES
REGARDING IDENTIFICATION OF DECEASED INDIVIDUALS CAN BE MADE
THROUGH THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE AT
THEIR 24-HOUR NUMBER (619) 694-2895. INFORMATION WILL ONLY BE

PAGE FOUR DE FBISD 0004 UN AS		
GIVEN OUT TO THE NEXT OF KIN.	SAN DIEGO POINT OF CONTACT FOR	
THIS INVESTIGATION IS SSRA	OR SA	b 6
NORTH COUNTY RESIDENT	AGENCY, AT	b7C
BT		
#0004		

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